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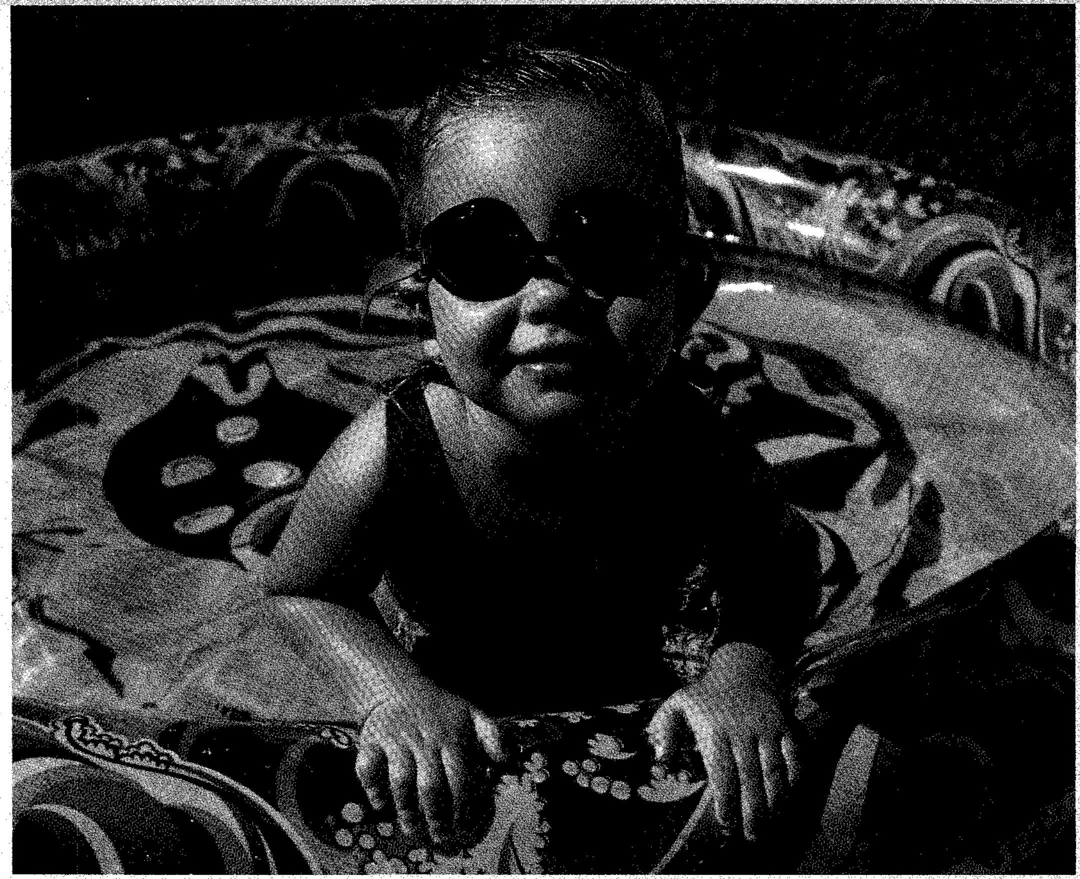

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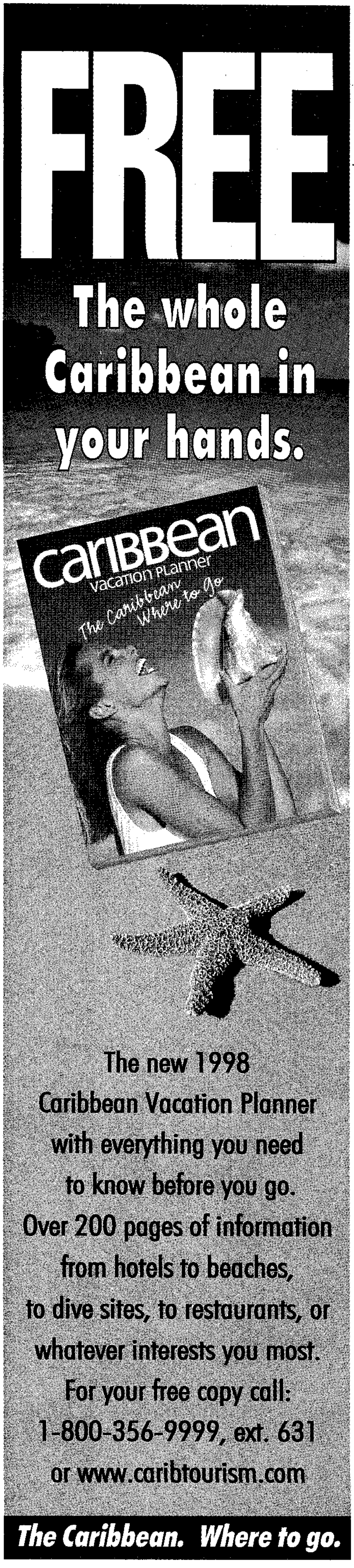

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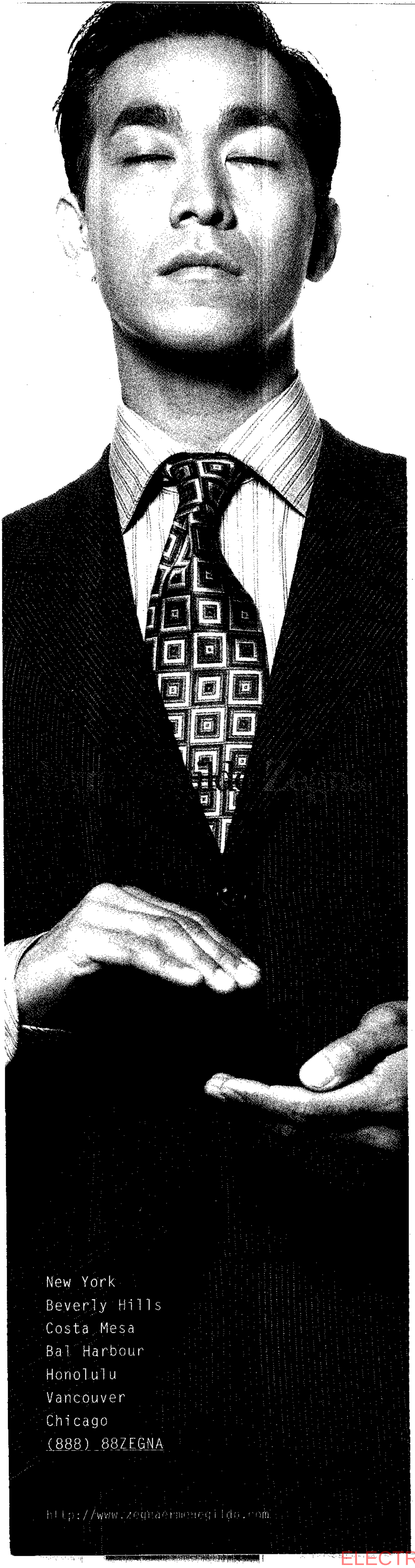

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COMMENT

PAGING J. P. MORGAN

Who should pay Korea's bills?

WHEN the call came, on October 19, 1907, John Pierpont Morgan, aged seventy, was in Virginia, entertaining a group of Episcopal bishops. He responded to it immediately, taking an overnight train to Jersey City, a ferry across the Hudson, and a cab to his home, on East Thirty-sixth Street. His arrival was greeted with great cheer. Nobody else could be relied upon to end the panic that was sweeping through the financial markets. For the next two weeks, Morgan shuttled between his offices, at 23 Wall Street, and his library, in midtown, where a group of frightened men were trying to prevent a run on the banks. "Morgan sat in the [library's] West Room at his little card table, smoking a cigar and playing solitaire," one of his biographers, Frederick Lewis Allen, tells us. "The bankers would work out a scheme, and one of them would cross the marble hallway to the West Room and tell Morgan about it, and he would listen, and say briefly, 'No, that won't work.' "

Eventually, Morgan settled on a plan. The stronger financial institutions, like his J. P. Morgan & Company, would provide tens of millions of dollars of their own money to rescue their weaker brethren. Predictably, some of the bankers balked, but Morgan locked them in his library until he and they came to an agreement. Allen recounts the climax of the meeting: "Morgan put his hand on the shoulder of Edward King, the dean of the group. 'There's the place, King,' he said firmly. 'And here's the pen.' And he put a gold pen in King's hand. King signed. Then they all signed. Morgan had carried the day. It was a quarter to five in the morning."

Last week, amid another financial epizootic, the nation's leading financiers (and some from farther afield) were back at J. P. Morgan & Company, which has moved along Wall Street to No. 60. The names of the beleaguered money houses had changed—Korea First Bank instead of Knickerbocker Trust Company, and Seoulbank instead of Mercantile National Bank—but the dilemma was the same one that Morgan had confronted ninety years ago: how to restore public confidence in the financial system and keep a crisis from turning into a catastrophe.

One other thing has changed, too. The chances of Morgan's successors' financing a Korean rescue package wholly with their own capital are nonexistent. The bankers have already made it clear that they will lend no more money to

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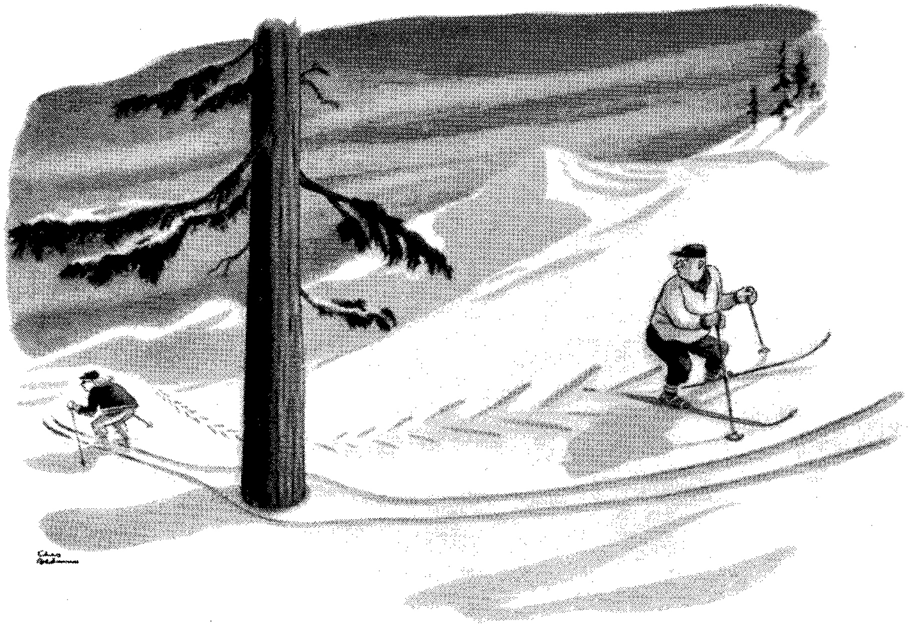
Korea unless the Seoul government guarantees their past loans. If the government capitulates, loans that were advanced to pay for unfinished golf courses and empty skyscrapers will be replaced by national debt—an exchange that will cost Korean taxpayers billions of dollars. Meanwhile, the only new money entering Korea is coming from foreign taxpayers who have pledged, through the International Monetary Fund and other global institutions, about a hundred and twenty billion dollars in loans to the erstwhile "Asian tigers." Much of this money is being used by the recipients to pay off international banks, which are owed about four hundred billion dollars by Korea and other Asian countries.

Understandably, many people are uneasy about these developments. Late last year, Congress refused to finance an increase in the United States contribution to the I.M.F., and a number of right-wing commentators—notably Lawrence Lindsey, a former governor of the Federal Reserve Board—have advocated letting the troubled Asian banks go belly-up, despite the fact that the banks' foreign lenders would suffer big losses. Even Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin is uncomfortable about bailing out his former colleagues on Wall Street.

The objection to letting banks collapse is that when this strategy was tried previously it helped produce the Great Depression. There is no way of knowing what would happen if the experiment were to be repeated, but a series of Asian banking collapses could easily spiral into a worldwide deflation, which would sink the American stock market and stop the economy in its tracks.

There are other options. One would be to change the way the I.M.F. is financed so that it could levy contributions from commercial banks as well as from member governments. Another would follow Morgan's example, by requiring the banks to bail each other out through a system of compulsory mutual insurance. A third option, for the longer term, would be to split the banking industry into two sectors: publicly insured "narrow banks," which could invest their depositors' money only in relatively safe assets, such as government bonds; and uninsured "broad banks," which could invest as they saw fit. People who put their money in a broad bank would receive more interest, but would risk losing everything if their bank failed.

None of these options are perfect, but at least they would address the perverse incentive that prompts bankers to lend money to virtually anybody during a boom and then, when things go bust, to shift the bill onto the taxpayers. Under the current system, the bankers are like suicide bombers, who must be appeased because they are threatening to blow everybody else up, too. Save us, they say, or the world economy goes down with us. Morgan, who was proud to declare, "I owe the public nothing," would have been outraged by the very thought of such behavior. —JOHN CASSIDY



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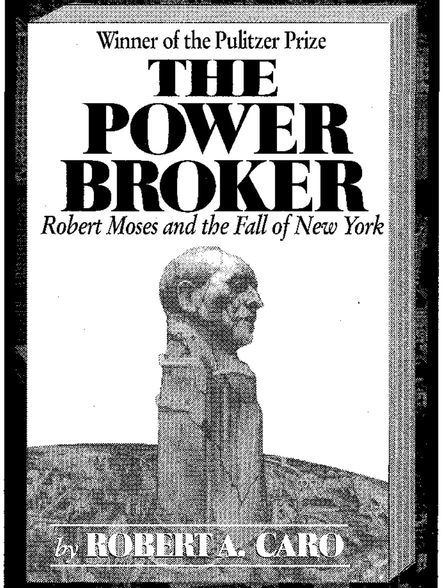
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Elected officials risk losing re-election bids for many reasons. But none is more noble than taking a stand for the greater good in opposition to powerful special interest groups or the pressures of constituents. It's exactly this kind of political risk-taking that is typical of a Profile in Courage Award winner. And right now, the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation invites nominations for this year's award, honoring publicly elected officials at all levels of government for exemplary acts of political courage as described by President Kennedy in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book Profiles in Courage: "...for those elected officials ...acting in accord with their conscience, risk their careers by pursuing a larger vision...in opposition to popular or powerful pressures...." The award, presented at a ceremony in May, is accompanied by a $25,000 monetary prize and a silver lantern designed by Edwin Schlossberg Inc. and crafted by Tiffany & Co. For information and nomination materials, contact: The John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, Columbia Point, Boston, Massachusetts 02125. Phone: 617-436-9986. Fax: 617-436-3395.

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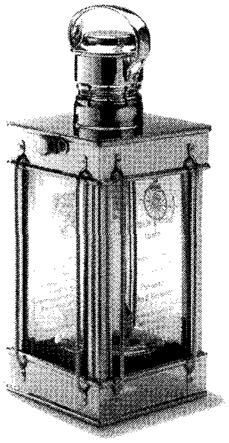

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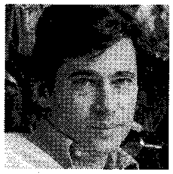

JOAN ACOCELLA ("The Soloist," p. 44) is the dance critic for the *Wall Street Journal* and has been a contributor to this magazine since 1992. Her first book, "Mark Morris," on the modern-dance choreographer, was published in 1993.

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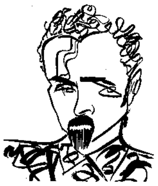

LAWRENCE SCHILLER ("Justice Boulder Style," p. 32) has written and collaborated on eleven books, including "American Tragedy" and Norman Mailer's "The Executioner's Song." His production and directing work for television has won five Emmys.

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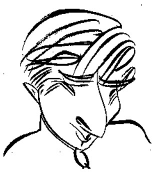

JAMES SUROWIECKI (Books, p. 72) writes a weekly business column for *Slate,* and is a columnist for the on-line finance magazine *The Motley Fool.*

PETER DE SÈVE (Cover) has illustrated book covers, and posters for Broadway plays, including "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum." A show of his work was on view at the Museum of American Illustration last year. This is his tenth *New Yorker* cover. ♦

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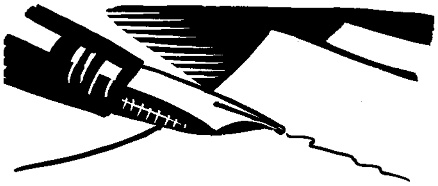

POLITICAL CARTOONS

I was surprised that Adam Gopnik, in his article on Thomas Nast ("The Man Who Invented Santa Claus," December 15th), didn't mention Nast's creation of another iconic American image: Uncle Sam. The term Uncle Sam dates from the War of 1812, but Nast's rendering of the figure, which appeared in *Harper's* in 1868, was the first to show the image we know today: the lanky, goateed figure in a top hat. Nast borrowed some of the details from a circus comedian named Dan Rice, who wore a flag suit as part of an election-year shtick in which he pretended he was running for President—neatly anticipating by exactly one century the late Pat Paulsen, who became famous for his double-talk "editorials" on "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" and launched the first of several facetious campaigns for President in 1968.

STEVE CANNON
Redlands, Calif.

DODGY CHARACTERS

In "The Big Hitter" (December 8th), about the possibility that Rupert Murdoch will buy the Los Angeles Dodgers, Connie Bruck quotes the acting baseball commissioner, Bud Selig, as saying of Murdoch, "He is very controversial. Owners have concern about character. I have heard it again and again." One wonders if any of those owners have talked to, or even heard of, the owner of the Cincinnati Reds, Marge Schott.

TOM SPEROS
Minneapolis, Minn.

TOO-EASY STREET

I was shocked when, in Suzannah Lessard's otherwise uncompromising description of New York's Great Divide ("The Split," December 8th), I came to the line "Life is life wherever it is, inherently equal in a way that mere social and economic differences could never alter." That word "mere" kept popping out at me. With it, Lessard betrayed her own powerful vision and, in a feel-good conclusion, let all of us off the hook of having to deal with the shameful problem of the stark line separating rich from poor at East Ninety-sixth Street.

DANIEL BENZALI
Malibu, Calif.

STOP THE HUMANITY

That President Clinton, as Joe Klein reports, regards Al Gore's difficulty with situations requiring Johnny-on-the-spot emotions as a political negative ("Learning to Run," December 8th) is a telling reminder of what Americans have come to expect from our media-enhanced candidates for political office: a television act. After all, how long can anyone be tuned in and turned on before he stops feeling anything?

CATHERINE DE LAURENTIS
Oaklyn, N.J.

WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Roger Angell writes that he doesn't quite understand why the current crop of *New Yorker* cartoonists so adamantly insist on writing their own captions, as opposed to the old days, when collaboration with others was common ("Congratulations! It's a Baby," December 15th). He asks, "Should there have been only one Gershwin?" Of course not, but Ira was always given prominent credit for his lyrics. The sheet music didn't read "'S Wonderful: A Song by George Gershwin." Since a cartoon has only one signature at the bottom, readers naturally assume that person to be its sole creator, and it's not unreasonable that cartoonists would want this assumption to be true.

DAVID ENGLISH
Somerville, Mass.

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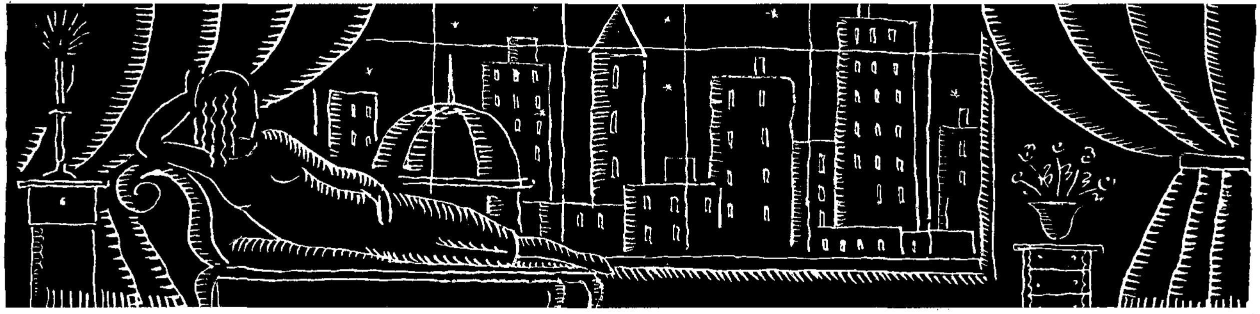

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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18	19	20				

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The Baltimore Waltz—Fourth-year students of the Juilliard Drama Division perform a 1992 drama by Paula Vogel, the author of "How I Learned to Drive." Jan. 14-16 at 8, Jan. 17 at 2 and 8, and Jan. 18 at 7. (Juilliard Drama Theatre, 60 Lincoln Center Plaza. For information about tickets, call 769-7406.)

Benita Canova—Richard Foreman's new play, about a band of menacing schoolgirls, was inspired by the works of the painter Balthus. Opens Jan. 15 at 8. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

The Capeman—A musical by Paul Simon and Derek Walcott, based on the life of Salvador Agron, a New York gang member who in 1959, at sixteen, was sentenced to death for murder. Directed and choreographed by Mark Morris. In previews. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Century City—A baseball player is accused of rape in this legal drama by Mark Lee, starring Ellen Parker and Marcus Giamatti. Opens Jan. 14 at 8. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

Freak—John Leguizamo portrays dozens of characters in his new one-man show. Previews begin Jan. 20. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Gun-Shy—In Richard Dresser's romantic comedy, an ex-couple finds divorce as difficult to maintain as marriage. Directed by Gloria Muzio. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Iolanthe—Presented by the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players. Jan. 15-16 at 8, Jan. 17 at 3 and 8, and Jan. 18 at 3. Through Jan. 25. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

June Moon—The Drama Dept.'s encore production of Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman's 1929 comedy, about a Tin Pan Alley songwriter. Mark Nelson is the director. Two previews on Jan. 14. Opens Jan. 15 at 6:30. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Ragtime—Terrence McNally (book) and Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens (score) have adapted E. L. Doctorow's 1975 novel for the musical stage. Frank Galati is the director. In previews through Jan. 17. Opens Jan. 18 at 5. (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—The sleight-of-hand artist returns to the stage with an encore production of his 1994 one-man show. Directed by David Mamet. Opens Jan. 14 at 8. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 787-3471.)

Scotland Road—In Jeffrey Hatcher's mystery, a woman rescued from an iceberg in the North Atlantic claims to be a survivor of the Titanic disaster. Melia Bensussen is the director. In previews. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

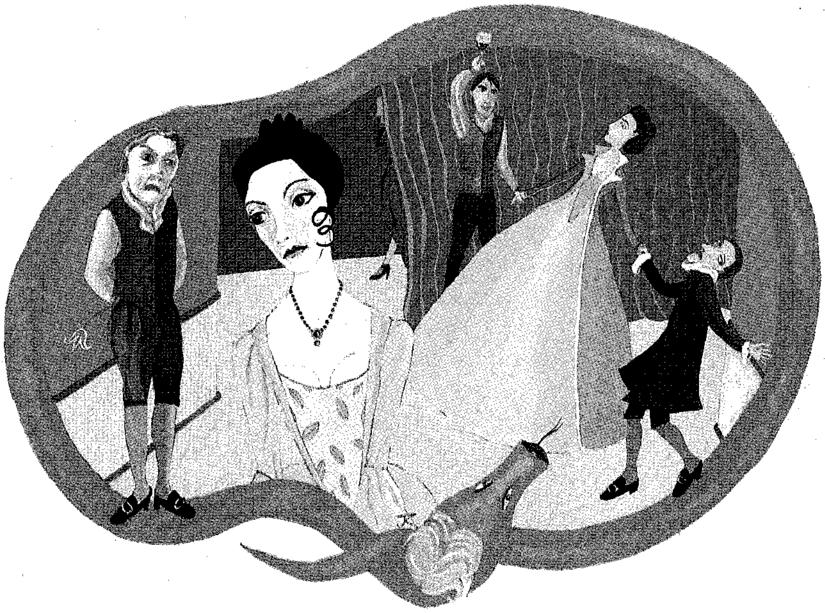
Shopping and Fucking—British playwright Mark Ravenhill's portrait of dissolute youth in London. Max Stafford-Clark and Gemma Bodinetz co-directed. Previews begin Jan. 14. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Theatre for a New Audience—Presenting repertory performances of "Richard II" and "Richard III," starring Steven Skybell and Christopher McCann, respectively. Ron Daniels is the director. Previews begin Jan. 17. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

Virtue: Senpo Sugihara—A drama by Koichi Hiraishi, based on the actions of Senpo Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat who helped free thousands of Polish Jews while stationed in Lithuania in 1940. A production of Tokyo's Gekidan Dora Theatrical Company. Previews Jan. 16-17. Opens Jan. 18 at 3 and continues through Jan. 23. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Bashevis: Tales of I. B. Singer—Three of Isaac Bashevis Singer's stories ("A Quotation from Klopstock," "The Yearning Heifer," and "A Wedding in Brownsville"), beguilingly told by the actor David Margulies, alone onstage. For those who are familiar with Singer, the performance brings fresh life to his wise and funny tales of Jewish intellectuals in Europe and America; for those who aren't, the writer's sharp-eyed compassion should be a revelation in itself. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)



The Pearl Theatre Company's staging of "The School for Scandal."

JULIA KUHL

Beauty—Steven Patterson's one-man show, inspired by the works of Jean Genet, was originally seen at the 1994 San Francisco Fringe Festival. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 627-2556.)

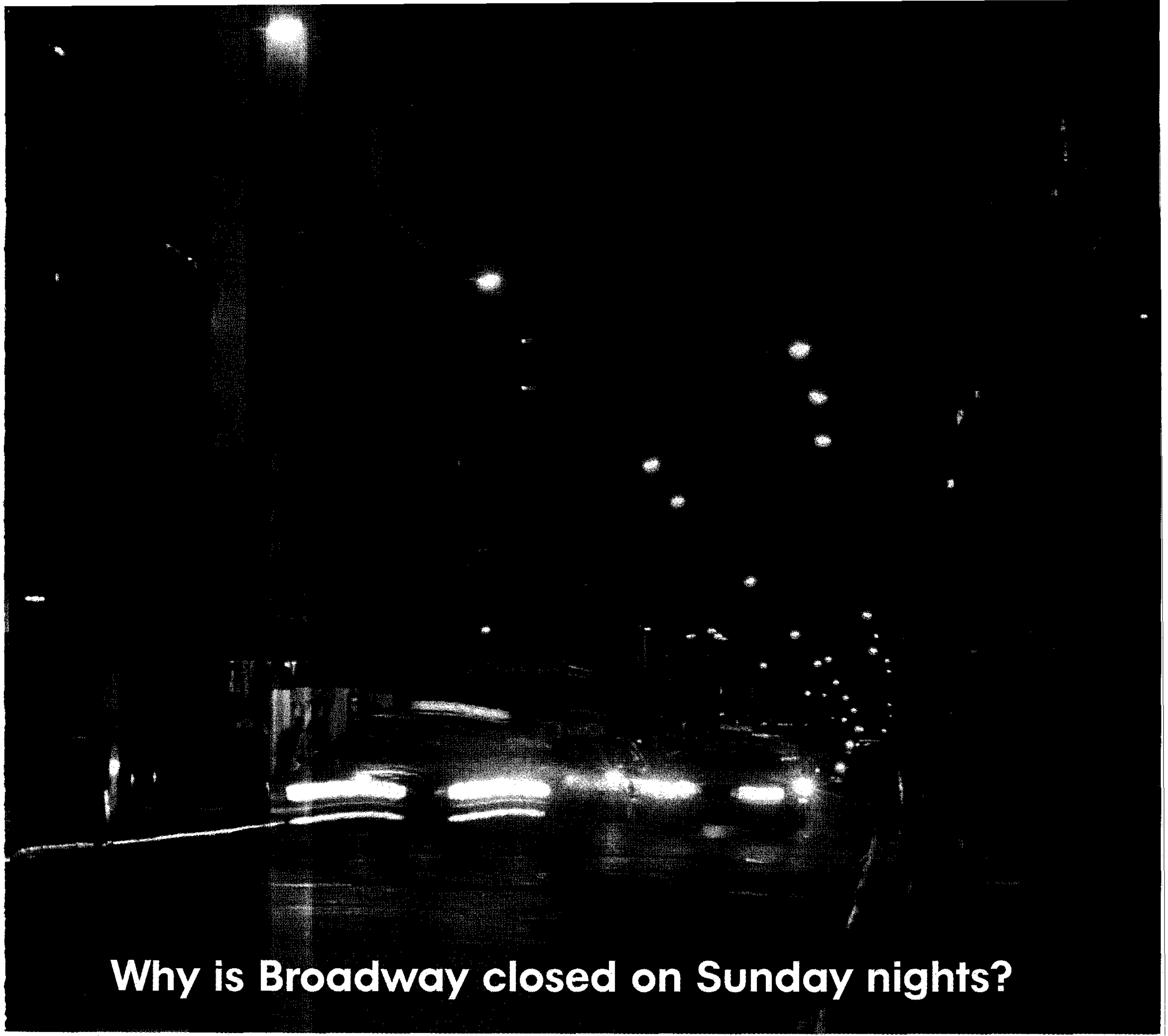
Black Humor—Topical comedy, written and performed by the political satirist Lewis Black. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Cyrano de Bergerac—Frank Langella directs, and dons the schnozz in, his own adaptation of Rostand's romantic drama, from a translation by Brian Hooker. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Jan. 25.)

The Diary of Anne Frank—This revival of the 1955 play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett aims for realism and historical scrupulousness: the new adaptation, by Wendy Kesselman, dispenses with the creaky devices of the original and adds material that Anne's father, Otto Frank, edited out of the first published version of the diary. There may be much to admire about the production—theatrically, it's an improvement, and the cast, under the direction of James Lapine, is generally fine—but the play's realism is also its fundamental flaw: its attempt to re-create Anne Frank's experience literally, to show us "what it was like," represents a failure of imagination. Accuracy is not a substitute for truth—and one of the truths we take away from Anne's diary is that we *can't* know what it was like. With George Hearn, Sophie Hayden, Harris Yulin, Austin Pendleton, and, as Anne, Natalie Portman, who looks the part but has a stiff and studied girlishness. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/15/97.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Field of Mars—A production inspired by Tacitus, in which the audience wanders through the set as the action progresses. Staged by Gale Gates et al. (37 Main St., Brooklyn. 718-522-4597. Closes Jan. 24.)

Goose-Pimples—In Mike Leigh's 1981 play, set in the pathetic zebra-striped bachelor pad of a London car salesman, a group of striving friends (keenly played by Max Baker, Gillian Foss, Sam Rockwell, and Caroline Seymour) can't help projecting their hopes and their



We like to think *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre* has something to do with it. That Broadway shuts down, if not to honor television's longest running quality series, at least to enjoy it. For 27 years, *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre* has been a stand-out achievement in American television, and we have been its only sponsor. In that time, some things have changed, for example, many of the show's early performers are now legends. But other things—the high standard of material, performance and production, plus our partnership with PBS—haven't wavered. Neither has the loyal audience. If you're among them, thank you. If not, please join us. *Reckless*, a new three-part romantic comedy, starts January 18th. For more about Mobil and the arts, catch our other new show. It's always open at www.mobil.com/arts.

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bitterness onto a non-English-speaking Arab (Adam Alexi-Malle), who's with them only because of an accident of miscommunication anyway. Under the clear-eyed direction of Scott Elliott, the New Group brings a near-excruciating realism to Leigh's bleakly comic portrayal of the cruelty disappointment can inspire. At the end of the play's two and a half hours—it takes place virtually in real time—you'll feel lucky to have lived through it. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Jan. 18.)

I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!—A mean little cocktail from Sandra Bernhard, composed of equal parts stand-up, performance art, cabaret, world-weariness, and dish. Although the cracks in the plaster holding her many selves together sometimes reveal an unexpected vulnerability and gentleness, she maintains complete control from her spike-heeled perch. Ms. Bernhard resumes performances on Jan. 19. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 307-7171.)

The Irish . . . and How They Got That Way—A generally good-natured if somewhat choppy revue by Frank McCourt, performed by a versatile and charming cast of six singers and musicians. Deftly directed by Charlotte Moore. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Jan. 25.)

Jackie—A complete delight. The playwright, Gip Hoppe, may be satirizing what we think we know about the former First Lady, but he does it with such heart and high comedy that you may not want to leave the theatre. Margaret Colin leads the gifted cast, and Hoppe, who also directed, is aided and abetted in this zaniness by the set designer David Gallo. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Joseph Gabriel Magic '98—It's all too clear from the trappings of his act that Mr. Gabriel comes to New York by way of Las Vegas, but his feats are certainly impressive. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Last Session—A musical by Steve Schalchlin (music and lyrics) and Jim Brochu (book), about an AIDS-afflicted songwriter's final studio work. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Life's Loss's Loved—Kirk Wood Bromley and Aaron Beall's contemporary sequel to "Love's Labour's Lost." (Nada, 167 Ludlow St. 420-1466. Closes Feb. 1.)

The Lion King—The director Julie Taymor has created a theatrical event far more textured and original than the animated film, submerging the audience in a mythic universe; it's like being in a dream awake. The show's high visual style, however, is in sharp contrast to its low verbal one. Garth Fagan is the choreographer. (11/24/97) (New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Marc Salem's Mindgames—The mentalist claims that his highly entertaining mind-reading act is both hocus-pocus-free (anyone who has studied the human mind for thirty years can do it, he claims) and scam-free (the producers have offered a hundred thousand dollars to anybody who can discover hidden electronic devices). Still, his fascinating "tricks" seem like magic, and the fun comes from trying to figure out how in the world he does them. At times you feel like you're the only person in the audience who isn't a plant. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Mojo—Two parts Mamet, one part Pinter, and a smattering of Shepard, mixed together by the young Briton Jez Butterworth, whose characters converse in a flashy, garbled Cockney that's as unreal as the story's premise. Neil Pepe is the director. (12/1/97) (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Closes Jan. 17.)

The Old Neighborhood—David Mamet's three elegant, autobiographical one-act plays full of laughter and lament. Well acted by Peter Riegert, Patti LuPone, Vincent Guastaferro, Rebecca Pidgeon, and Jack Willis, and crisply directed by Scott Zigler. Serious, beautiful, and short: an almost impossible feat these days on Broadway. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Pride's Crossing—Tina Howe's new play is a tedious switchback ride up a mountain of family memories, crosscutting between the old age of Mabel Tidings Bigelow, who is ninety and once swam the English Channel, and the upper-middle-class family that she tried, but finally failed, to break free of. Howe makes the fatal mistake of confusing illustrative incident with dramatic action. Fortunately, Mabel is portrayed by Cherry Jones, who polishes all the tics, fumbles, and feisty outbursts of a nonagenarian to a high shine. Jack O'Brien directed. (1/5/98) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Scarlet Pimpernel—This new musical, based on the Baroness Orczy novel, has a lot going for it (if you don't count its music and lyrics, which are dreadful and appalling, respectively): its charismatic star, Douglas Sills, Andrew Jackness's sets, and Jane Greenwood's costumes. Peter Hunt directed. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

FRANÇOISE ROUSSET

The School for Scandal—With productions as good as this one by the Pearl Theatre Company, it's easy to see why Richard Brinsley Sheridan's two-hundred-and-twenty-year-old comedy of manners has remained so popular. A topnotch ensemble of seventeen, under the sure-handed direction of Shepard Sobel and Joanne Camp, gives the play, which concerns the perils of gossip, everything it deserves and more. Bradford Cover is particularly fine as a gentleman with a secret behind his parlor screen. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Jan. 25.)

Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know—A comic revue inspired by the Fodor's handbook of the same title. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

1776—Scott Ellis's lean, lively production of Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone's still fresh 1969 musical about the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. (9/8/97) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

70 Hill Lane—A performance by London's Improbable Theatre of Phelim McDermott's memory play about his family's haunted house. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Closes Jan. 18.)

The Shoulder—Writer and director Dan Hurlin and composer Dan Moses Schreier's chamber opera was inspired by a 1994 newspaper report about a man who, unable to renew his driver's license because of poor vision, drove his riding lawnmower for forty-one days across the state of Iowa to tend to his sick brother. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Closes Jan. 17.)

The Show Goes On—Lyricist-librettist Tom Jones and composer Harvey Schmidt star in a revue of their songs. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

Signature Theatre Company—The Arthur Miller season continues with two one-acts, "I Can't Remember Anything" and "The Last Yankee," directed by Joseph Chaikin. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

Street Corner Symphony—A revue of some thirty songs, mostly from the sixties and seventies, which turns into a real beltfest at times. When the eight cast members tone things down a bit and do some harmonizing, though, you recognize what the show could have been. Conceived, choreographed, and staged by Marion J. Caffey. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

The Sunshine Boys—A revival of Neil Simon's comedy about two irascible old vaudevillians which provides a double dose of nostalgia: the tour guides for this trip to a bygone era of show biz are Ye Olde Odd Couple of television, Tony Randall and Jack Klugman. While there are some very funny lines, the production is somehow lacking in chemistry. The sandpapery friction that the twosome created so successfully on TV isn't much in evidence—they seem reduced to lovability. That's not a crime, but this production is definitely for those who prefer a warm cup of cocoa to a brisk toboggan ride. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Two Pianos, Four Hands—With the Canadian keyboardists Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Underground Goddess—Abigail Gampel's one-woman show, which she describes as "a raw, Ann Margret-style theatre event . . . with lots of song styles, a bit of dance, and a great gown." (Nuyorican Poets Café, 236 E. 3rd St. 505-8183. Closes Jan. 31.)

A View from the Bridge—Despite its cool reception in 1955, Arthur Miller's tragic story of the longshoreman Eddie Carbone and his obsession with his orphaned niece proves, in this Roundabout Theatre revival, a potent and durable American fable. Under the skillful direction of Michael Mayer, Anthony LaPaglia gives Eddie a brooding, exciting presence, and Brittany Murphy, as his niece, captures every nuance of her character's child-woman appeal. The expert cast also includes Allison Janney, as Eddie's frazzled wife, and Gabriel Olds and Adam Trese, as the illegal immigrants whose arrival sets the tragedy in motion. The spare but suggestive set is by David Gallo. (1/5/98) (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

Visiting Mr. Green—Eli Wallach portrays a Jewish widower, in a drama by Jeff Baron. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

LONG RUNS

AS BEES IN HONEY DROWN: Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **FOREVER TANGO:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE:** Century, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU,**

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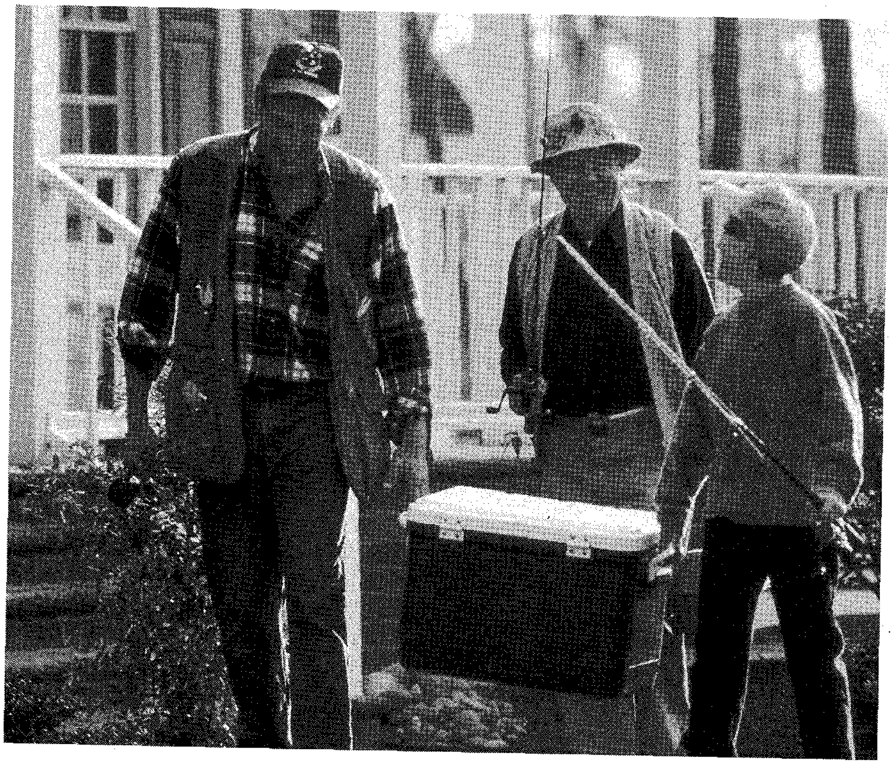

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YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE: Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200. . . . **THE LIFE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—Jan. 14 at 8: "Jewels." . . . ¶ Jan. 15 at 8: "Divertimento No. 15," "In Memory of . . . ," and "The Four Temperaments." . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 8: "Slavonic Dances," "A Schubertiad," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 2: "Jewels." . . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 8: "Monumentum pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano and Orchestra," "Romeo and Juliet," "In Memory of . . . ," and "West Side Story Suite." . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 3: "Square Dance," "A Schubertiad," and "Brandenburg." . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 8: "Ash," "Romeo and Juliet," "In Memory of . . . ," and "Stars and Stripes." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through March 1.)

"ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT"—The annual festival of contemporary dance continues. **JOY KELLMAN & COMPANY:** Jan. 14 at 8. . . . ¶ **MARK DENDY DANCE & THEATRE:** Jan. 15-16 at 8. . . . ¶ **WALLY CARDONA QUARTET:** Jan. 17 at 8. . . . ¶ **RONALD K. BROWN/EVIDENCE:** Jan. 18 at 2 and 7:30. . . . ¶ **NAI-NI CHEN DANCE COMPANY:** Jan. 20 at 8. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Jan. 25.)

"LIQUID GRIP"—Choreographer Molly Rabinowitz presents a group work in tight spaces ("Spinal Trap"), group and solo versions of a piece about range of motion ("Joint Venture"), a duet for two Alexander Technique teachers ("Mercury"), and the title work, for three women and a metal barre. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Jan. 15-18 at 8:30.)

"LATE NIGHT SUGAR FLIGHT"—Ben Munisteri has various strategies for lightening the formalist tendencies of his choreography—joking, for example. "At the beginning of a rehearsal," he says, "I look at each dancer's face, to determine who has been crying, who is about to cry, and who will be crying by the end of the day." In his new full-length work, however, it's the music that does the surprising: his dancers don't hear the score (a different mix of music, ranging from Donizetti to Cornershop, every night) until they appear onstage. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Jan. 16-17 at 11 P.M. Through Jan. 24.)

DANCES BY NANCY ZENDORA—For its twentieth-anniversary season, the nine-member troupe presents four works, including "Sleep Has Her House" and "Eeyah." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Jan. 15-18 at 8:30.)

A.B.T. STUDIO COMPANY—The junior touring company of American Ballet Theatre has designed a program for younger audiences, with "Raymonda," "La Folia," "Carnival of the Animals," and excerpts from "Don Quixote." (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Jan. 16 at 7 and Jan. 17-18 at noon and 5.)

"PHYSICALLY INCLINED"—Choreographer Jody Oberfelder presents works for all ages, including "Expectant Tango," for six mothers to be; "Rock Me Mama," for three parents and their newborns; and "In Tandem," a duet for forty-five-year-old twins. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 777-6227. Jan. 14-17 at 8 and Jan. 18 at 3.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

THE ROLLING STONES—You have to give Mick Jagger credit: at fifty-four, his hips and lips are still fine-tuned, fully loaded weapons. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Jan. 14 and Jan. 16 at 8.)

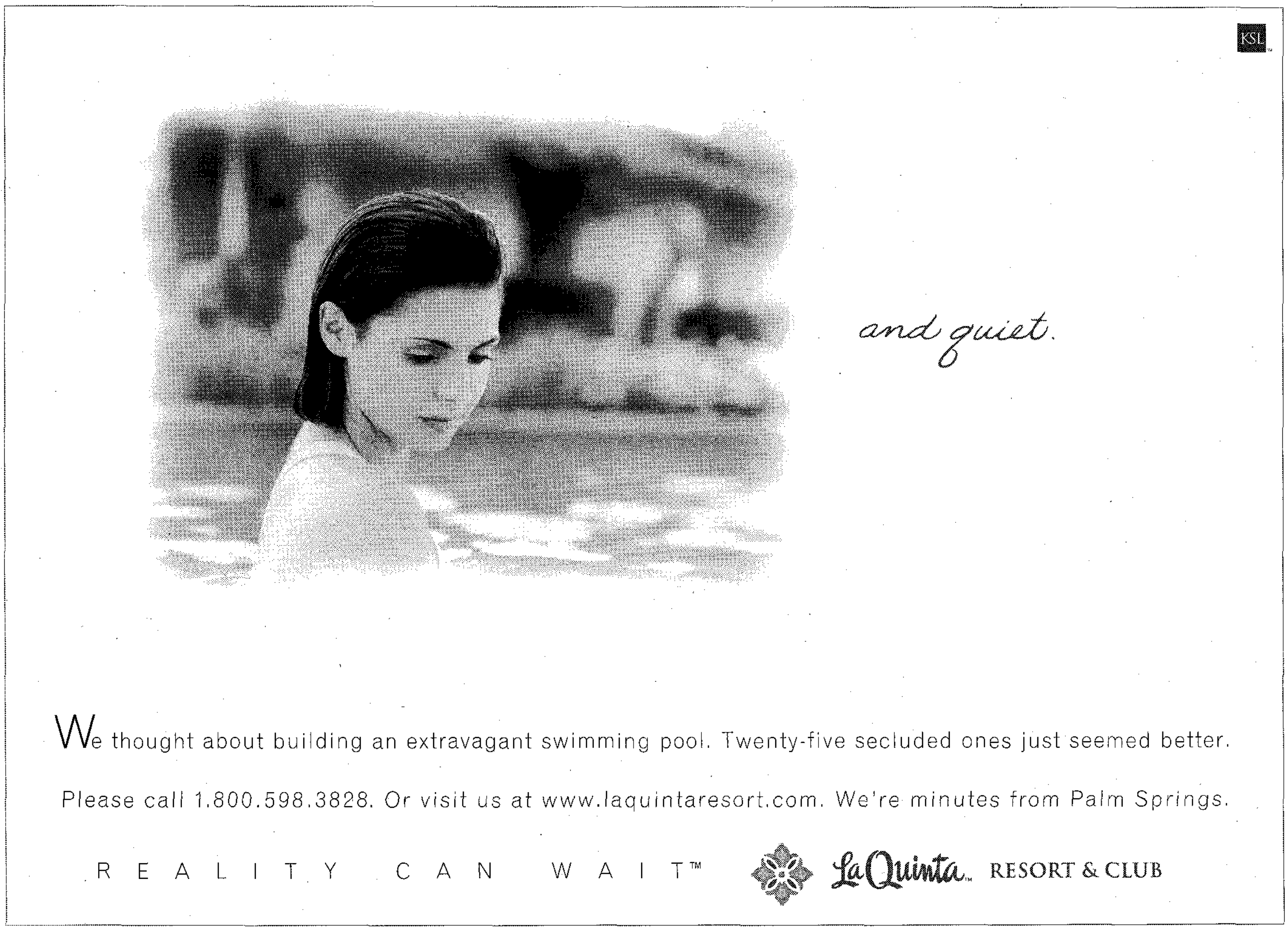
YANNI—The hirsute composer-keyboardist who has become the Barbara Cartland of pop music. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Jan. 14-20 at 8. Through Jan. 24.)

JAZZ AT MOMA—Pianist Jaki Byard and saxophonist Michael Marcus perform solo and together. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9491. Jan. 16 at 5:30.)

THE MEETINGHOUSE JAZZ ORCHESTRA—With alto saxophonist Bobby Watson. (Friends Meeting House, 15 Rutherford Pl., between Second and Third Aves. Jan. 16 at 7:30. Tickets at the door.)

BOB DYLAN AND VAN MORRISON—On "Time Out of Mind" (His Best Solo Album in Years, runs the insistent industry refrain), the Bobfather turned in a gouty, blues-soaked back-porch grind (with sympathetic, stuffy production by Daniel Lanois) that some found less a lament than a drag. As for the prickly, surly, and deliciously unpredictable Morrison, he's been known to sulk his way through substandard gigs as often as he's slain audiences with his magisterial, neuralgic soul. Given the power of decades' worth of I'm-more-enigmatic-than-you one-upmanship, both boys should be on their best behavior. (The Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Jan. 16-18 and Jan. 20-21, all at 7:30.)

PHONG NGUYEN ENSEMBLE—Folk music and dance from Vietnam. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. 545-7536. Jan. 17 at 8.)



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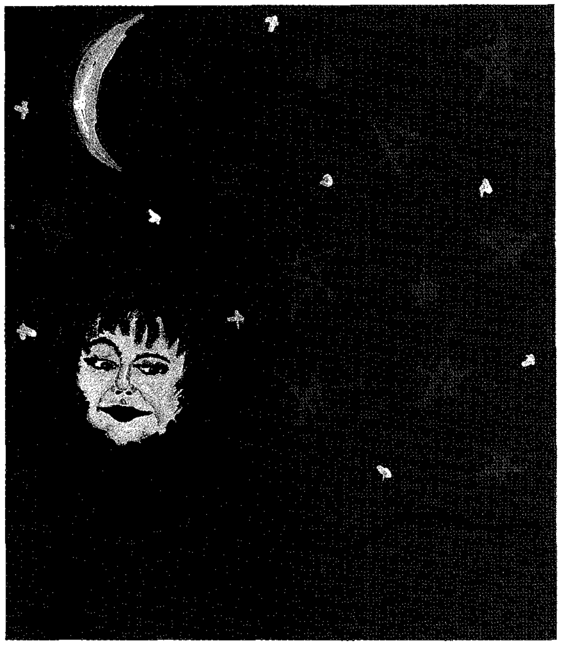

Carol Sloane, at Rainbow & Stars.

ELIZA GRAN

Sweet Honey in the Rock—The R. & B.-jazz-gospel group's annual concert for children, commemorating the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. For information about tickets call 274-1948. Jan. 18 at 2.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Jan. 15-17: Bassists who follow the path of the innovative giant Scott LaFaro often exchange finger-busting prowess for lyricism, but **gary peacock** isn't one of the offenders. He's a cerebral player who can swing a band clear off the stage when he wants to. Most often heard in Keith Jarrett's trio, this considerable composer and crafty bandleader deserves his status as a demi-legend. Jan. 18: **chico o'farrill and his afro-cuban jazz orchestra.** Jan. 19: The **toshiko akiyoshi** jazz orchestra, featuring the bandleader's husband, tenorist and flutist **lew tabackin.** Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Jan. 18: **joe louis walker and the bosstalkers.** San Francisco bluesman Walker's latest recording, "Great Guitars," is a stunner, with appearances by Bonnie Raitt, Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, and Taj Mahal. He's joined here by another contributor to that album, disgraced bandleader turned comeback kid **ike turner.** Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through March 7, the amazing **eartha kitt.**

Citron 47, at 401 W. 47th St. (397-4747)—A comfy living-room bistro in Hell's Kitchen. The **chuck wilson** trio is out to show that Monday nights aren't just for big bands. Swing saxophonist Wilson's chamber-jazz threesome includes guitarist **howard alden,** a master of pre-bop idioms, and bassist **murray wall.** Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Instead of mellowing with time, the pianist **ahmad jamal** (through Jan. 18) gets more eccentric. A charming minimalist back in the fifties, he has metamorphosed into a verbose extrovert with his own game plan of stop-start rhythms, mood-swing digressions, and shenanigans with his sidemen. What holds all this perversely fascinating stuff together? Simple: technique. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **les paul.** Dining.

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—**steve turre and his sanctified shell choir** are in through Jan. 16. If trombonist Turre's obsession with the ocean's natural instruments seems a bit out there, his powers of persuasion certainly don't: he's got his whole band eagerly blowing into conch shells and producing beautiful tones that have little precedent in jazz. Jan. 17-18: Vocalist **melissa walker** and her quartet. Starting Jan. 19: The **wess (warmdaddy) anderson** quartet.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—The intense, probing work of the daring British drummer **tony oxley** (Jan. 18) has been heard with such disparate leaders as Bill Evans, John McLaughlin, and Cecil Taylor. Jan. 19: The **oliver lake big band.** Lake is one versatile musican. A tart-toned saxophone virtuoso who could sustain an entire evening with his solo improvisations, he's also a big thinker with a taste for large ensembles that can show off his meaty compositions and his sure sense of coloring. No wonder **dave douglas** (Jan. 20) is the downtown trumpeter of choice. He's got the requisite open-vista imagination and eclecticism (he fronts a string quartet this time around), but old-fashioned polish is his real edge. A conservative streak accounts for his sparkling sound and for the compositional resources that have made his recent recordings so memorable.

Lenox Lounge, 288 Lenox Ave., between 124th and 125th Sts. (427-0253)—This Harlem club brings first-rate jazz back north with a vengeance. Jan. 18-19: The **chico freeman** quintet. Freeman, a versatile instrumentalist who concentrates on tenor sax, is making a very graceful transition from youthful avant-gardist to middle-aged classicist. With his complete command of his horn, he can now move in any direction he pleases—the ultimate freedom.

• •

RADIO WEST 43RD STREET

Twenty favorites from our 1997 jazz playlist.

Celebrating Sinatra, Joe Lovano (Blue Note).
Angel Song, Kenny Wheeler (ECM).
Strings for Holiday, Lee Konitz (Enja).
Thirteen Ways, Fred Hersch, Michael Moore, and Gerry Hemingway (GM).
1+1, Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock (Verve).
Zayen, Masada (DIW Japan).
Between Heaven and Earth: Music of the Jewish Mystics, Andy Statman (Shanachie).
Standing on a Whale, James Emery (Enja).
Colors, Ornette Coleman and Joachim Kuhn (Verve).
The Brass Orchestra, J. J. Johnson (Verve).
Paired Down, Vol. 1, D. D. Jackson (Justin Time).
No . . . Really!, People Like Us (Koch).
The Complete RCA Victor Small Group Recordings, Benny Goodman (RCA Victor).
Hot Jazz on Blue Note, Various Artists (Blue Note).
The Complete Atlantic Recordings, 1956-1961, Charles Mingus (Rhino).
The Lee Konitz Nonet (Chiaroscuro).
Breezin' Along, Kenny Davern (Arbors).
Dave McKenna and Buddy DeFranco: You Must Believe in Swing (Concord).
Sea Changes, Tommy Flanagan Trio (Evidence).
Awareness, Larry Goldings (Warner Bros.).

ONE OF the differences
between greatness
and mere eccentricity,
is an ability in the truly great
to draw out the genius
in another.

So it was with some smacking
of the lips that we heard of a
recent tasting organized
by Decanter Magazine.

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were to be rated in terms of
'partnership appeal' with that
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RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—**CAROL SLOANE,** the masterly New England jazz singer and sometime mellifluous disk jockey, is here for just two weeks. Sloane, like a host of others, came out of Ella Fitzgerald, but Ella built her songs brick by cheerful brick, while Sloane carves and bends and polishes hers, making them into subtle, moving secrets between the two of you.

SMALLS, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—Recently heard in fine form with trumpeter Tom Harrell, **GREG TARDY** (Jan. 15) is a no-nonsense post-bop tenor saxophonist who seems intent on making a name for himself. The **JASON LINDNER BIG BAND** holds court every Monday; the **LARRY GOLDINGS** trio has Tuesdays; and the **SAM YAHEL ORGAN QUARTET** is in each Wednesday.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. Through Jan. 18: **TERELL STAFFORD,** a sharp young neo-bop trumpeter who, as a graduate of Bobby Watson's populist bands, has learned how to keep one eye on the bandstand and the other on the audience. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The **DONALD HARRISON** quartet is in through Jan. 18. Saxophonist Harrison was one of the first members of the early-eighties New Orleans jazz crowd to hit New York. With a plangent tone, rootsy feel, and pedal-to-the-floor momentum, he made himself right at home. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Jan. 17: Straight out of Memphis comes pianist **CHARLES THOMAS,** a legend whose students include two excellent New York transplants, Mulgrew Miller and James Williams. Thomas has the poise we associate with Red Garland and the funky filigree that all Memphis pianists soak up from their maestro, Phineas Newborn. **RAY DRUMMOND,** New York's most reliable bassist, provides support, and, on Jan. 14, drummer **BILLY HIGGINS** joins the duo. From Jan. 19: **KEN PEPLOWSKI, MICHAEL MOORE, AND HOWARD ALDEN.** A chamber-jazz supergroup—clarinettist, bassist, and guitarist, respectively. They make beautiful music and beautiful music only, immersing themselves in the pleasures of melody and tone—three gently subversive generals leading an army of players which is fortifying the city with lyricism and grace. Dining.

ROCK, ETC.

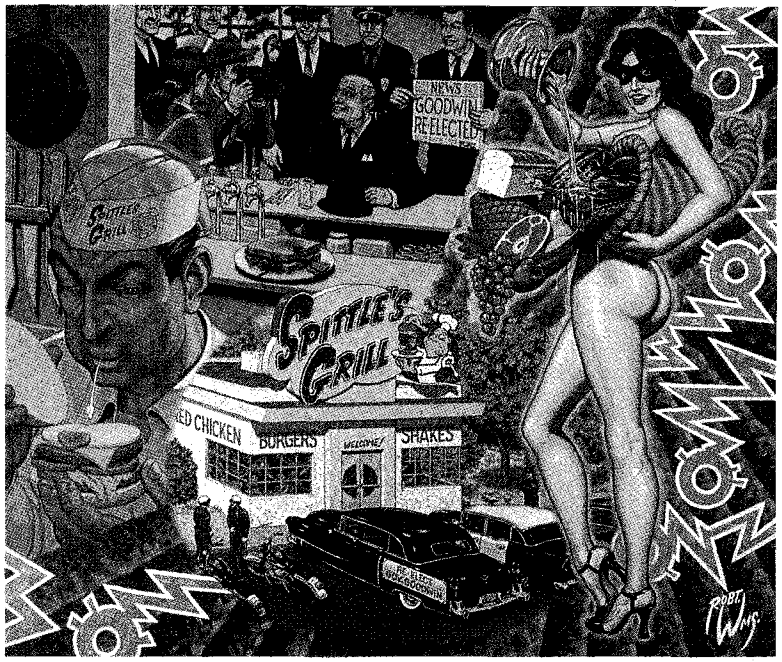
ARLENE GROCERY, 95 Stanton St., between Ludlow and Orchard Sts. (358-1633)—A narrow, dimly lit renovated bodega that's the perfect generic environment for three to five unknown bands each night trying to escape obscurity.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Jan. 15: "Nightbirds," featuring **CHRISTINE LAVIN, TRISH MURPHY AND THE PSYCHO SISTERS,** and **LIZ QUELER.** Jan. 16: Up-and-coming singer-songwriters **PETE BELASCO** and **DAVID POE.** Guitarist **BILL FRISELL** (Jan. 17), perhaps the most distinctive stylist in contemporary jazz, has spent much of his career getting in touch with his inner Chet Atkins. On last summer's "Nashville," he finally came clean, and luxuriated in the mountain-stream lyricism of country-style picking. He's joined here by drummer **JIM KELTNER** and bassist **VIKTOR KRAUSS.**

BROWNIES, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Jan. 17: The post-punk pride of Secaucus, the **WRENS.**

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving.

CONEY ISLAND HIGH, 15 St. Marks Pl. (674-7959)—Jan. 16: Pompadoured rockabilly legend **ROBERT GORDON.** Jan. 17: An evening of old and new rock with, among others, **? AND THE MYSTERIANS** (who recorded "96 Tears," arguably the greatest single in history, in 1966) and garage-punk heroes the **LYRES.**



"Expectorating in a Fast Food Patron's Double Burger Deluxe" (1997), by Robert Williams, at the Tony Shafrazi gallery.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. Having earned post-punk immortality as the force behind Hüsker Dü and pop kudos with the more nuanced, misanthropic Sugar, **BOB MOULD** (Jan. 16-18) has now entered the elder-statesman phase of his complicated career. The cabaret setting will show off his gift for lyrics and his dynamic thunder. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

THE GREATEST BAR ON EARTH, 1 World Trade Center (524-7000)—Hyperbole, perhaps, but it's certainly the highest. And Thursdays through Saturdays you'll find live music, dancing, and dining, a hundred and seven stories above the city.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Jan. 14: Rampantly eclectic clarinettist **DON BYRON** performs with rapper **BIZ MARKIE.** Jan. 15: **"EUREKA: INVENTORS AND THEIR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS,"** a program of music for such experimental instruments as gravikords, whirlies, and pyrophones. Jan. 17: A conclave of downtown titans—saxophonist **JOHN ZORN,** guitarist **ELLIOTT SHARP,** drummer **BOBBY PREVITE,** and keyboardist **WAYNE HORVITZ.**

LES POULETS, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and, now and then, a cha-cha. Dining.

S.O.B.'S, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. In the seventies, while many of his R. & B. peers were blissfully succumbing to disco fever, singer-pianist (and poet-novelist) **GIL SCOTT-HERON** (Jan. 18) was fusing jazz and funk textures with sobering political rap. He's been on the road ever since. Dining.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Jan. 15-16: **WEEN.** On their 1996 disk, "Twelve Country Greats," Dean and Gene Ween sank their fangs into the ankle of country-and-Western music, revealing themselves to be master parodists. Much of the album is inspired, and, as with their 1994 breakthrough, "Chocolate and Cheese," you just can't stop listening. Their latest effort, "The Mollusk," offers more of their zany, Zappa-esque irreverence. Jan. 18: A hot Cajun dance party with **NATHAN AND THE ZYDECO CHA-CHAS.**

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era." A sumptuous collection of rare Indian carpets from the late sixteenth century (when the Mughal emperor Akbar founded the first imperial carpet workshops) through the eighteenth. The finest were made from pashmina, the underfleece of the Himalayan mountain goat, on silk foundations, and there is a stunning example here from around 1630, during the reign of Shah Jahan, when the flower style dominated: a shimmering niche carpet in exquisite dyes—pink, sand, ivory, celadon, mandarin, garnet—with a leafy, blooming poppy plant flanked by a pair of tulips in the center. With about two thousand knots per square inch, it's breathtaking. Through March 1. . . . ¶ "King of the World: A Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle." Through Feb. 8. . . . ¶ "Jackson Pollock: Early Sketchbooks and Drawings." Through Feb. 8. . . . ¶ An exhibition at the Costume Institute devoted to the work of Gianni Versace. Through March 22. . . . ¶ "Francesco Clemente: Indian Watercolors." Through Feb. 8. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"On the Edge: The Werner and Elaine Dannheisser Collection." Elaine Dannheisser, the colorful collector who butted heads with Morley Safer on the notorious "60 Minutes" segment trashing contemporary art, seems like an archetype of the eighties, a decade when patrons sometimes eclipsed artists. The collection she and her husband have donated to the museum does include important pre-eighties works—by Joseph Beuys, Lawrence Weiner, Carl Andre, and Robert Ryman, among others—but its standouts are by the stars of the Gordon Gekko years: Jeff Koons, Robert Gober, Anselm Kiefer, etc. Given the Modern's somewhat conservative reputation as a bastion of modernist aesthetics, the Dannheisser bequest is significant. Through Jan. 20. . . . ¶ "New Video from Great Britain," a two-hour compilation of short works, each from one to eighteen minutes long, by Gillian Wearing, Ed Lipski, Sam Taylor-Wood, and others. On a continuous loop, through Feb. 1. . . . ¶ "Deadpan," Steve McQueen's aptly titled four-minute silent film

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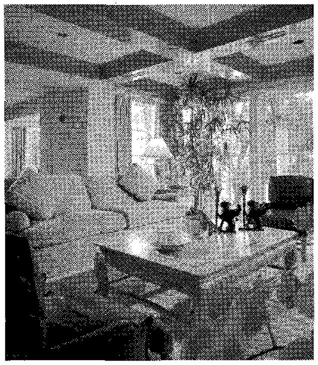

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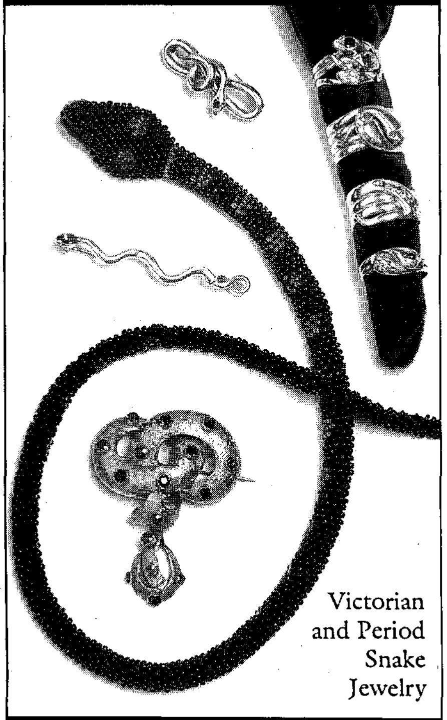

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inspired by a famous Buster Keaton sight gag. The artist conveys a Keatonesque stoicism as he stands in a field before a lone log house and one of its walls crashes down around him (in repeated takes). Fortunately, he's in a spot that corresponds to a window opening. Through Feb. 10. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. *(423-3500)—Selections from the permanent* collection are on view. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"The Warhol Look/Glamour Style Fashion." Through Jan. 18. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"The Nature of Diamonds" looks at many facets of the adamantine stone, from its birth in volcanic fissures to its eventual rise to the heads of heads of state (e.g., on the crown of Peter the Great, displayed in the exhibition's walk-in diamond vault). Through April 26. . . . ¶ "Drawing Shadows to Stone: Photographing North Pacific Peoples, 1897-1902" commemorates the museum's five-year Jesup expedition, organized by Franz Boas, one of the first anthropological ventures to supplement field observation with photography and recordings. Through March 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"The Furniture of George Hunzinger: Invention and Innovation in Nineteenth-Century America." Settees, daybeds, plant stands, stationary rockers, and a multitude of other chairs (many of them Hunzinger's 1866-patented folding-reclining ones), by one of America's preëminent Victorian furniture makers. His constructions reflect the period's gluttonous appetite for the Gothic and the Baroque, as well as the aesthetics of his native southern Germany: there is a kind of Wagnerian madness to much of his work, but its unabashed eccentricity is precisely its appeal. However, his best constructions are his most Spartan ones, utilizing, in place of traditional upholstery, grids of woven wire which are, in fact, oddly beautiful. Through Feb. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5912)—"1962/63, 1970, 1996" focusses on three decisive moments in the career of the minimalist sculptor Dan Flavin (1933-96). The "icons" of the early sixties—a series of eight painted, wall-mounted boxes to which he attached fluorescent and incandescent light fixtures in various shapes and colors—represent his first experiments with light as a medium for sculpture; they have an amusingly goofy quality that belies the radical nature of his gesture. He continued to push the implications of that gesture with a pivotal piece he titled "The Diagonal of May 23, 1963 (to Constantin Brancusi)," consisting of nothing more than a single diagonally mounted fluorescent fixture. An untitled installation in blue and red fluorescent light, from 1970, is one of his largest and most elaborate projects: maximalist minimalism. Finally, from the year of his death, there are the site-specific pieces he created for the stairwells at Dia. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

GROLIER CLUB, 47 E. 60th St. (838-6690)—"The Book Room: Georgia O'Keeffe's Library in Abiquiu" presents the artist's books, periodicals, and ephemera, including a copy of "Portrait of Mabel Dodge at Villa Curonia," presented to Alfred Stieglitz by its author, Gertrude Stein; a copy of Oscar Wilde's "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" pencilled throughout with Edward Steichen's Surrealist drawings; and O'Keeffe's collection of books on Asian art, literature, and philosophy. Through Feb. 21. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—"Assignment: Rescue, the Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee," an exhibition devoted to the efforts of an editor at the Foreign Policy Association, in New York, who saved nearly two thousand artists, intellectuals, and political refugees—including Marc Chagall, André Breton, Hannah Arendt, and Jacques Lipchitz—whose lives were endangered by the "surrender on demand" clause in a treaty between Vichy France and Germany. Through March 29. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

MUSEO DEL BARRIO, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (831-7272)—"Taíno: Pre-Columbian Art and Culture from the Caribbean" chronicles the religious and secular life of some of the islands' original inhabitants. The few words from the Taíno language that survive in English ("barbecue," "canoe," "hammock," "hurricane") offer hints about this civilization, but much more can be gleaned from the artifacts collected here: worked-seashell amulets, three-pointed stones dedicated to the cassava gods, wooden chairs carved with animal figures for the local chieftains, vomit-inducing bone spatulas used by shamans to prepare the body for the ingestion of sacred hallucinogens. Through March 29. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

THE NEW MUSEUM, 583 Broadway (219-1222, ext. 217)—Despite delays in its renovation and expansion, the museum has reopened its original exhibition space for a mid-career retrospective of the work of the Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum, whose sculptures and video installations range from the lyric and frivolous ("Hair Necklace") to the macabre and excruciatingly tactile ("Pin Carpet" and "Entrails Carpet," as well as "Corps Étranger," in which a fiber-optic video camera makes a tour of the artist's innards). Through Feb. 22. (Open Wednesdays and Sundays, noon to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, noon to 8.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER, 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—The school for scandal is again in session, with a re-creation of "Rooms," the museum's inaugural group show from 1976, and one-person exhibitions from the late filmmaker Jack Smith, photographers John Coplans and Martin von Haselberg, and sculptors Jackie Winsor and Lynne Yamamoto. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

FRANZ KLINE (1910-62)—An engaging survey tracing the painter's artistic growth from the representational portraits and sketches of his twenties and thirties to the culmination of his exploration of Abstract Expressionism—the garish, hysterical "Scudera"—in the year before his death. Through Jan. 17. (Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870.)

JOAN NELSON—Two large, dark fictive landscapes in acrylic and oil on wood, and dozens of tiny, meticulous ones on paper, rendered, variously, in acrylic ink, spray enamel, wax, and glitter. Some are based on paintings by other artists, like Claude Lorrain and George Caleb Bingham, and some on found images—from the junk store, the attic, the *Reader's Digest*. Their size gives them the innate appeal of all miniatures, which take you to places far away; it also reminds you just how far away the natural world has come to seem. Through Jan. 24. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454.)

"THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS"—Works by Anthony Caro, Paul Feeley, Kenneth Noland, and Jules Olitski, a quartet of sculptors and painters who came out of Bennington College during an era when the critic Clement Greenberg used to visit the campus to encourage their muscular brand of abstraction. Alan Solomon's 1966 article for *Vogue*, in which he coined the triple-pun moniker (which slyly combines the Vermont military detachment, Noland's Black Mountain apprenticeship, and Greenberg's beneficent gaze), is reprinted in the catalogue. Through Feb. 28. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. 752-0124.)

"McEntee & Company"—A welcome reappraisal of the paintings and drawings of Jervis McEntee (1828-91), a Zelig of the Hudson River School, better known today for his friendships (protégé of Frederick Church, confidant of Sanford Gifford, travelling companion of Worthington Whittredge) than for his artistic output. Work by his chums is included for comparison. Through Jan. 17. (Beacon Hill Fine Art, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 734-3636.)

Short List—**Gustave Courbet**, Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays; through March 7. . . . **Arthur Dove**, Dintenfass, 20 E. 79th St. 581-2268. Through Feb. 28. . . . **William Gropper**, ACA, 41 E. 57th St. 644-8300. Through Jan. 31. . . . **Mitchell Johnson**, Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907. Through Jan. 28. . . . **Markus Lüpertz**, Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Open Mondays; through Jan. 24. . . . **Suzanne Pines** and **Nancy Hagin**, Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345. Both shows through Jan. 31. . . . **Tony Smith and Christopher Wilmarth**, Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through Jan. 24. . . . **Saul Steinberg**, Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. 861-7338. Through Feb. 7. . . . **George Tooker**, DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111. Through Feb. 7. . . . **Helen Torr**, Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 535-5767. Through Feb. 21. . . . **John Van Alstine**, Haime, 41 E. 57th St. 888-3550. Open Mondays; through Feb. 7.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Andy Warhol (1927-87) / **Yayoi Kusama**—Wafting through the gallery, Warhol's famous mylar "Silver Clouds" (1966; these are a re-creation) are irresistible. Kusama's large sculpture, "A Snake" (1974), is a long floor piece made of the eccentric Japanese artist's characteristic phallic tendrils. A winning combination. Through Jan. 31. (D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460.)

"Elevator"—A group show, curated by Mungo Thomson, of artists employing New Age-isms in their art. Knut Asdam's video tries to encourage spatial awareness by hypnotizing the viewer. Corey McCorkle fashions "orthopedic aids for the cosmically inclined"—custom chairs that help the user maintain the lotus position. Benita and Immanuel Grosser conduct on-site yoga classes to encourage a state of "non-anticipation" in gallerygoers. Through Feb. 7. (Martz, 529 W. 20th St. 206-3686.)

"5 x 5"—A single-evening group show, curated by Cynthia Rowley, of works by a quintet of artists, including Michael Crawford's paintings of well-dressed mobsters and Peter Yanowitz's oil portraits of dogs. Jan. 16, from 6 to 10. (Dodge Studios, 408 W. 15th St. 206-6993.)

"George Condo and William Burroughs: Collaborative Works"—Paintings, drawings, and a sculpture, made over an eight-year period at the late Beat legend's home in Lawrence, Kansas. The pictures freely combine abstract and representational elements in a manner that in recent years has grown very familiar. The crudely expressionistic figurative elements seem more likely to have been Burroughs's contribution. Through Jan. 17. (Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. 727-7366.)

Group Show—Works by Eugenio Dittborn, Willie Doherty, Mona Hatoum, and Doris Salcedo. Through Feb. 28. (Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 367-7474.)

Short List—**Thomas Andersen**, Kreps, 529 W. 20th St. 741-8849. Through Jan. 28. . . . **Leslie Lew Burns**, Kravets/Wehby, 529 W. 21st St. 352-2238. Through Jan. 24. . . . **Charles A. A. Dellschau**, Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through Feb. 7. . . . **Graciela Hasper**, Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through Jan. 29. . . . **James Hill**, Maynes, 529 W. 20th St. 741-3318. Through Jan. 28. . . . **Bob Knox**, Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701. Through Jan. 31. . . . **Francisco Leiro**, Marlborough, 211 W. 19th St. 463-8634. Through Feb. 7. . . . **Glenn Ligon**, Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Through Jan. 28. . . . **Scott Lyall**, Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through Jan. 31. . . . **Daniel Oates**, 303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121. Through Feb. 14. . . . **Ernesto Pujol**, Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930. Through Jan. 31. . . . **Carrie Yamaoka**, Debs, 529 W. 20th St. 647-7080. Through Jan. 17. . . . **Andy Zimmerman**, 5 East/Insinger, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4649. Through Feb. 8.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

John Baldessari—In "The Goya Series," the artist pairs his black-and-white emulsion-on-canvas photographs with titles drawn largely from Goya's "Disasters of War." Through Feb. 14. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. 966-6160.)

Alex Ross—An exhibition in green, of mostly abstract, biomorphic shapes and objects: tactile, jigsaw works made of small Gumby-like pieces of plasticine; wall hangings resembling cutouts of chemical-compound diagrams; and paintings of coffered vessels suggestive of organs or cytoplasm—all of it clean and quirky and cool. Also: a photograph of the artist's worktable, which features, among other objects, a small paperback, D'Arcy Thompson's "On Growth and Form." Through Feb. 13. (Feature, 76 Greene St. 941-7077.)

Robert Williams—Grandiloquently titled oils ("The Avatar of Inequity," "The Myth of the Proletariat King," "Harvesting Ectoplasm off the Evil Ghost of a Dead Monkey") painted in a friendly blend of embroidery-kit brushstrokes, kitchen-sink realism, Little Annie Fanny sexuality, album-cover apocalypticism, and general adolescent miscreancy. Through Jan. 31. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300.)

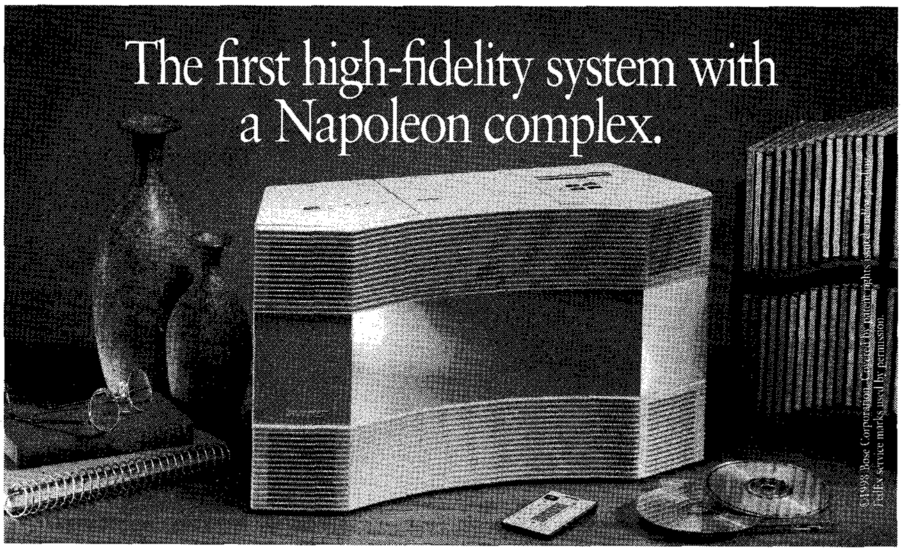
"Places That Are Elsewhere"—A group exhibition of slides, films, and videos, including a video version of the 1971 film "Swamp," by Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt, in which the invisible artists tramp through a beautiful stand of swamp grass, and "Corn," a 1996 video by Sam Durant and Andrea Bower, in which the invisible artists tramp through a beautiful field of corn, in homage to their predecessors. "Man Looking," an arresting 1979 slide projection by Peter Campus, shares the back room with a live video projection, by Jessica Bronson, of a surveillance camera's view of the front desk, accompanied by a soundtrack of howling wind. Through Jan. 17. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074.)

Short List—**Rita Ackermann**, Rosen, 130 Prince St. 941-0203. Through Feb. 7. . . . **Squeak Carnwath**, Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863. Through Feb. 14. . . . **Maureen Connor**, Marcus, 578 Broadway. 226-3200. Through Feb. 7. . . . **Hanne Darboven**, Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through Feb. 7. . . . **Paul Forte**, Foster, 62 Crosby St. 966-9024. Through Jan. 31. . . . **Peter Hutchinson**, Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Open Wednesday evenings until 8; through Feb. 7. . . . **William Kentridge**, The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166. Through Feb. 14. . . . **Sherry Markovitz**, Knowlton, 568 Broadway. 966-2625. Through Jan. 24. . . . **Ulrich Rückriem**, Ace, 275 Hudson St. 255-5599. Through Feb. 28. . . . **Julião Sarmento**, Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. 343-2405. Through Jan. 24. . . . **Philip Taaffe**, Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441. Through Jan. 31. . . . **Cindy Workman**, Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012. Through Jan. 31. . . . **Michael Zwack**, Kasmin, 74 Grand St. 219-3219. Through Feb. 7.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Sotheby's—Jan. 15: Furniture and decorative art from northern Spain; also, a numismatic sale featuring Early American cents and half-cents. . . . Jan. 16: American prints. . . . Jan. 16-17: A large sale of Americana from the collection of the late Stanley Sax. . . . Jan. 18: American furniture and folk art. . . . Jan. 20: Decorative silver and ceramics. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Phillips—Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century furniture and paintings. (Viewing, Jan. 16-19, and auction, Jan. 20, at the Fletcher Mansion, 2 E. 79th St. For information, call 570-4830.)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Winter Antiques Show—The forty-fourth installment of this upscale classic. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Jan. 16-25, with a benefit preview on Jan. 15. For information, call 718-292-7392.)

Americana at the Piers—A new show of American offerings (mostly from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), bringing together nearly four hundred dealers. (Piers 90 and 92, Twelfth Ave. at 50th St. Jan. 17-18. For information, call 255-0020.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Andreas Feininger—The veteran black-and-white photographer's emphasis on "clarity, simplicity, and organization" is evident even in his early, experimental work from the thirties, a good selection of which is on view here. Among the standouts are a negative print of German row houses, a Constructivism-tinged composition of five Stockholm ferries, and a picture enigmatically titled "Victory," in which a fresh-faced, smiling young woman shot from below sits jauntily atop the photographer's Opel motorcar. Through Jan. 24. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

Jan Groover—"Le Chantier," a group of twenty new platinum-palladium prints of the French countryside. Through Feb. 21. (Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166.)

Diana Michener—A new series of black-and-white plein-air self-portraits. Through Jan. 17. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999.)

Richard Rothman—"Shrubs," a selection of photographs taken over a six-year period which investigate our relationship to the often meagre landscape of New York City and its environs. Through Feb. 7. (Sorokko, 430 West Broadway. 941-8888.)

"Early Visions: 19th Century Photographs"—A winning selection of albumen and salt prints, none dating from later than the eighteen-eighties. The textures of tree branches, grass, and stone crackle in a Gustave Le Gray view of Fontainebleau Forest; an ashy mist envelops Burmese pagodas in an image by Linnaeus Tripe; a marshman poles a skiff in a painterly étude by Peter Henry Emerson. Other wonderful pictures are by such innovators and masters as Julia Margaret Cameron, Ernest Benecke, Felice Beato, Carleton Watkins, Roger Fenton, and Édouard Baldus. Through Jan. 24. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223.)

"Fotomontage: European and Russian Collage, 1920-1950"—Works by Berlin Dadaists, Russian Constructivists, and French Surrealists. Through Feb. 14. (Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444.)

"The 19th-Century Painted Photograph"—Hand-painted family-portrait and postmortem tintypes, as well as salt, albumen, and gelatin-silver prints. Through Feb. 7. (Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.)

"1930s New York"—Vintage works by Berenice Abbott, Sol Prom, Liborio Justo, and Joseph Kaplan. Through Jan. 17. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

International Center of Photography—"Nelly: From Athens to New York, the Work of Elli Seraïdari." . . . ¶ "Images from the Machine Age: Selections from the Daniel Cowin Collection." Both shows through Feb. 22. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—"Weegee's World: Life, Death and the Human Drama," a two-hundred-picture exhibition that spans the tabloid photographer's career. Through March 8. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**ZEKE BERMAN,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220. Through Jan. 17. . . . **CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. 319-1996. Open Mondays; through Feb. 7. . . . **PAUL CAPONIGRO,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through Feb. 14. . . . **MARGARET COURTNEY-CLARKE** and **TESSA TRAEGER,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510. Both shows through Jan. 24. . . . **IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM,** Platinum, 551 W. 22nd St. 352-0070. Closed Tuesdays, opens at noon; through Jan. 31. . . . **BENEDICT J. FERNANDEZ,** Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon; through Jan. 24. . . . **JOAN FONTCUBERTA,** Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223. Through Jan. 31. . . . **YEVGENY KHALDEI,** Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363. Through Feb. 21. . . . **REBECCA LEPKOFF,** Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Jan. 17. . . . **DANNY LYON,** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through Jan. 18. . . . **MARVIN E. NEWMAN,** De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Through Jan. 25. . . . **ARNE SVENSON,** Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Through Feb. 21. . . . **RANDY WEST,** Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Through Feb. 21. . . . **CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS,** Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. 219-9600. Through Feb. 7.

(See the museum listings for a photography exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History.)

Diana Michener's "Solitaire #10" (Pace Wildenstein MacGill).

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050, and for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**IL TROVATORE,** with June Anderson, Dolora Zajick, Richard Margison, and Juan Pons; conducted by Simone Young. (Jan. 14 and Jan. 17 at 8.) . . . **LA CENERENTOLA,** with Jennifer Larmore, Ramón Vargas, Alessandro Corbelli, Simone Alaimo, and Michele Pertusi; James Levine. (Jan. 15 and Jan. 20 at 8.) . . . Strauss's **CAPRICCIO,** with Kiri Te Kanawa, Kathryn Harries, David Kuebler, Simon Keenlyside, Wolfgang Brendel, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; Andrew Davis. (Jan. 16 at 8.) . . . **THE RAKE'S PROGRESS,** by Stravinsky, with Dawn Upshaw, Stephanie Blythe, Jerry Hadley, Samuel Ramey, and David Pittsinger; Mr. Levine. (Jan. 17 at 1:30.) . . . **L'ELISIR D'AMORE,** with Ruth Ann Swenson, Luciano Pavarotti, Earle Patriarco, and Paul Plishka; Maurizio Benini. (Jan. 19 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

Bronx Opera—Presenting Vaughan Williams's pastoral opera "Hugh the Drover," with Michael Spierman conducting. (John Jay Theatre, Tenth Ave. at 58th St. Jan. 16-17 at 8. For information about tickets, call 212-807-5636.)

"Die Ägyptische Helena"—Strauss's 1928 opera, the fifth of his six collaborations with the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal, centers on Helen of Troy in the years just after the Trojan War, when the military hostilities were replaced by her domestic ones with her husband, Menelaus. Its rarity in performance is doubtless due more to the plot's complexity (which is made no easier by a plethora of sprites and potions) than to its score, which is often luminous; it's one of those operas that may be served just as well in concert—as here—as fully staged. In this performance, Leon Botstein leads the American Symphony Orchestra, the New York Choral Artists, and a cast that includes soprano Deborah Voigt (in the title role), soprano Susan Patterson, tenors Pal Frey and Glenn Siebert, and baritone Peter Coleman-Wright. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Jan. 18 at 3.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Leonard Slatkin conducting. Jan. 15, Jan. 17, and Jan. 20, all at 8: The orchestra performs John Corigliano's "Fantasia on an Ostinato," Bernstein's ballet "Facsimile," Mozart's Symphony No. 31 (the "Paris"), and Rossini's "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" Overture; soprano Kathleen Battle is spotlighted in six Mozart arias. . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 6:45: A program for the after-work crowd, comprising Schuman's "New England Triptych," Bernstein's "Facsimile," and Copland's "Billy the Kid" ballet suite. (875-5030.)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost conducts works inspired by Greek myths and classical literature: Britten's "The Rescue of Penelope" (narrated by actress Lynn Redgrave), Vaughan Williams's Overture to "The Wasps," Sibelius's "Pan and Echo," a scene from Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex" (with mezzo-soprano Melanie Sonnenberg and tenor Jon Garrison), Barber's "Medea's Dance of Vengeance," Laurence Rosenthal's "The Clash of the Titans," and Schuman's "A Song of Orpheus" (with cellist Nathaniel Rosen). (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 15 at 7:30.)

Haydn Time—The conductor Robert Shaw is devoting this winter's Carnegie Hall Choral Workshop to Haydn's two great oratorios. After intensive rehearsals—with visiting choristers, the Robert Shaw Festival Chorus, several soloists, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's—the works move to the hall's main stage for potentially memorable performances. Jan. 15 at 7:30: "The Creation," with sopranos Sylvia McNair and Dominique Labelle, tenor Richard Clement, baritone Nathan Gunn, and bass-baritone Nathan Berg. . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 2: "The Seasons," with Ms. McNair, Mr. Clement, and Mr. Berg.

City Island Baroque Ensemble—Flutist Immanuel Davis and violinist Katie Wolfe are featured in concertos by Telemann and Leclair. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Jan. 18 at noon.)

Brooklyn Philharmonic—Peter Tiboris leads Verdi's Requiem, with a massed choir. The soloists are soprano Oksana Krovytska, mezzo-soprano Victoria Livengood, tenor Bo Song, and bass-baritone John Cheek. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 18 at 8:30.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard conducts Mozart's Symphony No. 21, Spohr's Violin Concerto No. 2 (featuring Charles Castleman), and Saint-Saëns's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Hyperion Knight). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Jan. 19 at 2 and 7 and Jan. 20 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

Israel Philharmonic Orchestra—Zubin Mehta conducts Strauss's "Till Eulenspiegel," Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante (K. 364, with violinist Itzhak Perlman and violist Pinchas Zukerman), and Stravinsky's "Le Sacre du Printemps." (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 19 at 7. A benefit concert.)

RECITALS

Bargemusic—Violist Toby Hoffman and pianist Stephanie Brown perform Schumann's "Märchenbilder" (Op. 113); violinist Carmit Zori and cellist Ronald Thomas join Ms. Brown for Haydn's E-Major Trio; and all four complete the program with Fauré's G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Jan. 15 at 7:30 and Jan. 18 at 4.)

Thomas Buckner—This baritone, a stalwart of the avant-garde, pops up frequently around town as a participant in exploratory ensembles. But every year he offers a more-or-less solo recital, too. This time, several colleagues assist him in the premières of pieces by Jacques Bekaert (a work based on the Orpheus legend, Greek mythology being the dominant force in this week's concert scene), Paul Epstein, Mel Graves, and Annea Lockwood (a "shamanistic evocation" for voice and tape). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Jan. 15 at 8.)

Marilyn Horne Foundation Concert—The organization's annual whoop-de-do features songs and arias performed by sopranos Benita Valente, Deborah Voigt, and Lynette Tapia; mezzo-sopranos Marilyn Horne, Dolora Zajick, Rinat Shaham, and Guang Yang (the winner of the 1997 Cardiff Singer of the World Competition); countertenor David Daniels; tenor Frank Lopardo; and bass Samuel Ramey. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 16 at 7:30.)

Juilliard String Quartet—The foursome offers quartets by Schubert (his Tenth), Gershwin ("Lullaby for String Quartet"), and Brahms (in C Minor). (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Jan. 17 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Chicago String Quartet—The première of Richard Wilson's Quartet No. 4 opens a program that also includes Bartók's Second Quartet and Brahms's Piano Quintet (with Menahem Pressler assisting). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Jan. 17 at 8.)

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LISTENING BOOTH

Expanding Horizons—The classical-music industry is employing increasingly desperate measures in its campaign to attract new, and especially younger, audiences. And then there's **EARQUAKE** (on the Finnish Ondine label), which converts listeners simply by demonstrating how exciting great music can be. The producers describe the disk—accurately—as "an explosive collection of great tunes, driving rhythms, and sonic thrills," thoughtfully underscoring the point by squeezing a pair of earplugs into the CD case, for the neighbors' sake. Leif Segerstam leads the Helsinki Philharmonic in powerful performances, and much of the fascinating repertoire through which the sixteen tracks range (including Erwin Schulhoff's "Ogelala" and Jón Leifs's "Hekla," the latter featuring a twenty-two-member percussion section) will be unfamiliar even to knowledgeable listeners.

Revelations of another kind come from **THE SECRET MUSEUM OF MANKIND** (on Yazoo), a remarkable series whose initial two volumes (issued more than a year ago) have now been joined by a new pair. Each disk escorts the listener on a trip through time and space to sample, in quick succession, the traditional musics of far-flung lands—for example, Russia, Nyasaland, Burma, Tuscany—as they were captured on recordings between 1925 and 1948. This was a critical period in musical history, a hairsbreadth away from the moment when radio and other forms of global culture-sharing would irreversibly alter traditions that had endured locally for centuries. The CDs are lovingly curated by Pat Conte, a postal worker by day, who has amassed more than fifty thousand ultra-rare 78-r.p.m. recordings of such material in the basement of his Long Island house; he juxtaposes tracks to highlight surprising correspondences between disparate traditions. It doesn't matter which volume you buy first.

Music from Japan—The annual festival of traditional and contemporary music, now in its twenty-third year. Jan. 17 at 8: Chamber music by Shin-ichiro Ikebe. . . . **NOTE:** At 7, Mr. Ikebe delivers a simultaneously translated lecture. . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 2: The Keiji Azechi Kokyu Ensemble—the kokyu is a bowed instrument of ancient lineage—performs traditional Japanese pieces, as well as works by Keiji Azechi, Minao Shibata, and Sayama Kengyo. . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 4: A symposium (including lectures, video clips, and live performances) on the late Toshiro Mayuzumi, whose "Kinkakuji" was on the roster two seasons ago at New York City Opera. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330.)

Magellan String Quartet—Performing quartets by Beethoven (in B-Flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6), Osvaldo Golijov (his "Yiddishbbuk"), and Schubert (the "Death and the Maiden"). (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5689. Jan. 18 at 2.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—The Society continues its monthlong investigation of turn-of-the-century scores with a pair of programs. Jan. 18 at 5: String quartets by Dohnányi (his Second) and Bartók (his First), as well as Reger's A-Minor Piano Quartet, performed by the Orion String Quartet and pianist Peter Serkin. . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 7:30: David Golub, one of the Society's resident pianists, performs Janáček's "In the Mists," Brahms's Six Pieces for Piano (Op. 118), three of Rachmaninoff's Preludes, and Debussy's "Estampes" and "Images." (Alice Tully Hall.)

Eugenia Zukerman and Anthony Newman—George Bernard Shaw began his career as a music critic: he chronicled the 1888-89 concert season for the London *Star* (under the pseudonym Corno di Bassetto), then spent four years reviewing for the *World*. Though it may be fair to ask whether his criticism would command as much respect as it does today if he had not gone on to win acclaim as a playwright, any shortcomings in his musical knowledge are more than balanced by the delightful style with which he makes his points. In this recital, Ms. Zukerman (the flutist) and Mr. Newman (performing on pi-

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LOOK WHO'S COMING TO BARNES & NOBLE

Velma Maia Thomas

Monday, January 19th, 7:30-8:30 PM
Union Square, 33 East 17th Street
Discussion • Signing

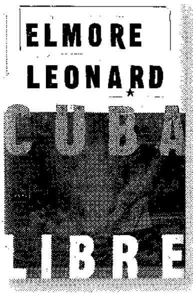
In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, author Velma Maia Thomas will discuss and sign copies of her powerful new book, *Lest We Forget: The Passage from Africa to Slavery and Emancipation.* Thomas will be joined by Michael Cottman and Tom Feelings.

Lest We Forget

Elmore Leonard

Tuesday, January 20th, 7:30-8:30 PM
Union Square, 33 East 17th Street
Reading • Discussion • Signing

Bestselling crime fiction author Elmore Leonard will read from, discuss and sign copies of *Cuba Libre*, his thrilling new novel set in Havana.



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ano) read excerpts from Shaw's commentaries about the composers whose works they present, including Beethoven, Saint-Saëns, and Wagner. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571. Jan. 20 at 6.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

SANDRA MILLER: Baroque flutist. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Jan. 16 at 8. No tickets necessary.) . . . **GREGG SMITH SINGERS.** (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Jan. 17 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-2990.) . . . **LUTHER COLLEGE NORDIC CHOIR.** (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 17 at 8.) . . . **CHAMBER ORCHESTRA KREMLIN.** (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Jan. 18 at 2.) . . . **NEW CENTURY SAXOPHONE QUARTET.** (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Jan. 18 at 3.) . . . **RICHARD KOGAN:** Pianist. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Jan. 18 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.) . . . **YAEL WEISS:** Pianist. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Jan. 19 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Daylight Come and Me Wan' Go Home—Multipolyomni and We, a trio of Brooklyn d.j.s specializing in illbient music (a turntable-driven form that incorporates everything from dance beats to Berber sacred music to weather forecasts), stages "The Solar Drama," an episode from its opera "Quark Soup." The twenty-four-hour affair combines real-time sunrises and sunsets (displayed on fifty-foot screens linked to cameras around the globe), planetary-mobile-making stations, live acoustic and electronic music created by fifty musicians, and (in a separate gallery) a performance of Eric Satie's twenty-four-hour composition, "Vexation." (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Jan. 17-18, from noon to noon.)

Thunderbird American Indian Dancers—New York City's resident Native American troupe celebrates its thirty-fifth anniversary with the largest powwow in its history. Thirty-five costumed dancers, representing more than ten different tribes, perform more than twenty dances, including the Butterfly (a Hopi ritual giving thanks for the beauty of nature), the Buffalo (a Hopi winter dance), Grass (from the Northern Plains peoples), and a piece for two women by the Los Angeles-based choreographer Michael Taylor. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Jan. 16-17 at 8 and Jan. 18 at 2 and 5.)

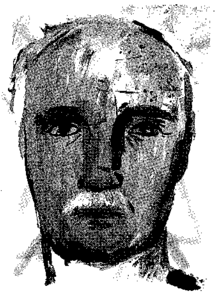
Readings—Jan. 17 at 3: By Samuel Menashe, from his poetry. (Jefferson Market Library, Sixth Ave. at 10th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 5: By poet Barbara Tran, novelist Quang Bao, and writer Lê Thi Diem Thúy, in an evening of Vietnamese-American literature. (Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway. 718-638-5000.) . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 8: By Elizabeth Gilbert, Dawn Raffel, and John Hodgman, from their fiction. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 8: By Saul Bellow, John F. Callahan, Albert Murray, and other writers, from the works of Ralph Ellison, to mark Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Talks—Jan. 17 at 3: Theatre historian Mary C. Henderson discusses the long-lost nineteenth-century theatre district around Union Square. (New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 870-1630.) . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 11 A.M.: Legal scholar Patricia J. Williams considers the modern civil-rights movement. (Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Sq. S. 477-0351.) . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 6:15: Constance Payne, a painter and associate professor of fine art at Buffalo State College, tells how the work of the nineteenth-century painter Rosa Bonheur influenced her own switch from conceptual art to representations of horses, dogs, and other animals. (Dahesh Museum, 601 Fifth Ave., at 49th St. 759-0606.)

BOOK CURRENTS

King's Roots

"MY work always hurtles me backward," says the journalist Taylor Branch, whose Pillar of Fire (Simon & Schuster)—the second volume of his biographical trilogy on Martin Luther King, Jr., "America in the King Years"—comes out this month. "You can't understand King unless you understand the black church," Branch says, "and you can't understand that unless you understand slavery."



Taylor Branch

KAREN CALDICOTT

Drawing on that connection, he points to Pauli Murray's Proud Shoes (out of print) as a "wonderfully evocative" family history, written by one of the early figures in the fight for school desegregation. Branch finds precursors to some of the arguments put forth on both sides in the civil-rights era in Robert Manson Myers's multivolume The Children of Pride (now abridged to one volume; Yale), the collected correspondence of a wealthy nineteenth-century Southern family whose members were scattered among several plantations. The family's patriarch, who believed that it was his duty to Christianize his slaves, happened to be the great-grandfather of the preacher to whom King addressed his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Still, Myers's great theme, according to Branch, is the "amazing capacity of people to adapt to privilege and think of it as necessary."

"The sweetest civil-rights memoir," Branch says, is Selma, Lord, Selma (University of Alabama), whose authors, Sheyann Webb and Rachel West-Nelson, were in grade school when they marched in Selma. Far more troubling is Anne Moody's Coming of Age in Mississippi (Dell), which vividly captures how "so many people from that period were in one way or another damaged by the intensity and the violence."

David Garrow's The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr. (out of print) illuminates some of the prejudices that resurfaced in the fight to establish King's birthday as a national holiday. According to Branch, this 1981 history of the F.B.I.'s surveillance of King was so far ahead of its time and so dense that "people still haven't realized how startling and how original it is, and how many political implications for American democracy are revealed there."

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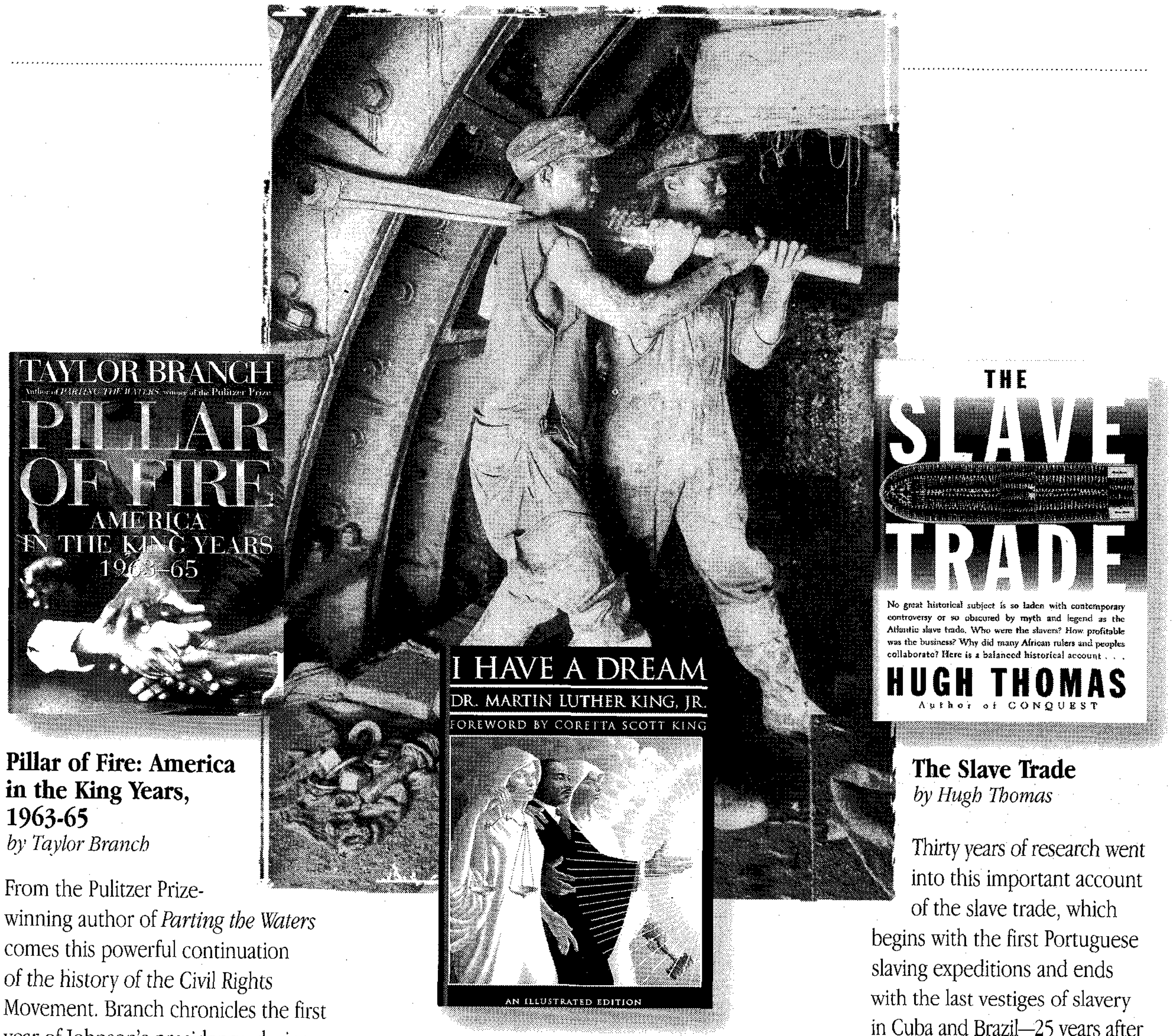
TAYLOR BRANCH
Author of PARTING THE WATERS, winner of the Pulitzer Prize
PILLAR OF FIRE
AMERICA IN THE KING YEARS 1963–65
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DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
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No great historical subject is so laden with contemporary controversy or so obscured by myth and legend as the Atlantic slave trade. Who were the slavers? How profitable was the business? Why did many African rulers and peoples collaborate? Here is a balanced historical account . . .
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Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-65

by Taylor Branch

From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Parting the Waters* comes this powerful continuation of the history of the Civil Rights Movement. Branch chronicles the first year of Johnson's presidency, during which the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed. (Simon & Schuster)

Pub. Price $30.00
B&N Price $21.00

I Have a Dream

by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., foreword by Coretta Scott King

Here in its entirety is the moving speech delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on August 28, 1963, complemented by a timely foreword by Coretta Scott King and beautiful interpretive artwork by 15 Coretta Scott King Award and Honor Book artists. (Scholastic Press)

Pub. Price $16.95
B&N Price $13.56

The Slave Trade

by Hugh Thomas

Thirty years of research went into this important account of the slave trade, which begins with the first Portuguese slaving expeditions and ends with the last vestiges of slavery in Cuba and Brazil—25 years after the American Emancipation Proclamation. (Simon & Schuster)

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THE MOVIES

OPENINGS

The Dress—Alex Van Warmerdam's film centers on a series of people who become associated with the title frock. In Dutch. Opening Jan. 16. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

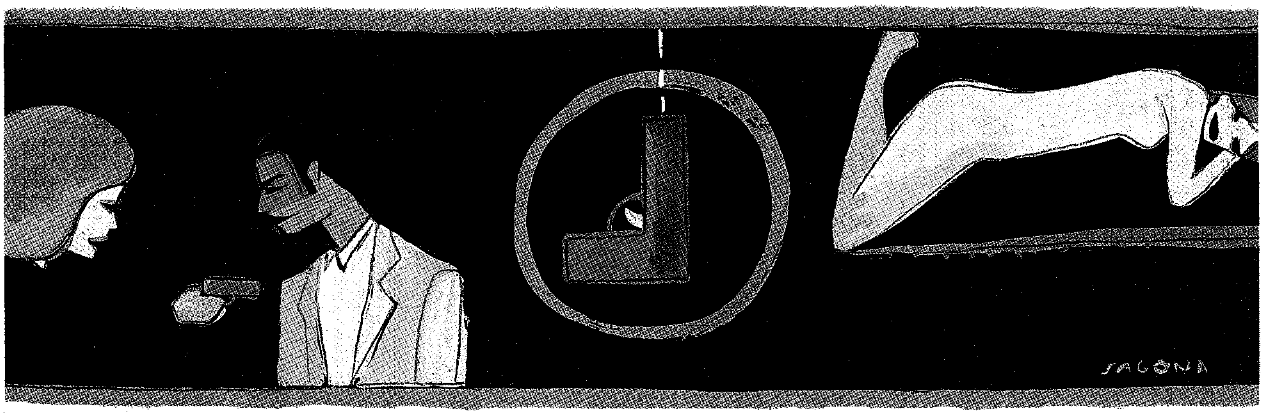
Fallen—A supernatural thriller about a spate of murders committed in the style of a killer who has already been executed. With Denzel Washington, John Goodman, and Donald Sutherland. Directed by Gregory Hoblit. Opening Jan. 16. (Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Full Speed—The début film of writer-director Gael Morel, about a successful young novelist and the effect of his attentions on three friends in the French countryside. In French. Opening Jan. 16. (Quad Cinema.)

Gonin—Five down-on-their-luck men dare to rob the local yakuza, in a thriller written and directed by Takashi Ishii. In Japanese. Opening Jan. 16. (Cinema Village.)

Half Baked—A comedy in which three young men plan to break a friend out of jail. Directed by Tamara Davis. Opening Jan. 16. (Criterion Center.)

Hard Rain—A drama directed by Mikael Salomon, about an armored-car robbery in a flooded Indiana town. Starring Morgan Freeman, Christian Slater, Randy Quaid, and Minnie Driver. Opening Jan. 16. (Art Greenwich Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, and Ziegfeld.)



Opening Jan. 16, Pedro Almodóvar's "Live Flesh."

MARINA SAGONA

Illtown—Writer-director Nick Gomez's story of three drug dealers. With Michael Rapaport, Lili Taylor, Adam Trese, and Kevin Corrigan. Opening Jan. 16. (Village East Cinemas.)

Live Flesh—In the writer and director Pedro Almodóvar's latest film, Liberto Rabal plays a young man who has been framed and sent to prison for seven years. In Spanish. Opening Jan. 16. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Star Kid—An adventure story in which a shy seventh grader (Joseph Mazzello) and an alien robot join forces to fight the one's fears and the other's extraterrestrial enemies. Written and directed by Manny Coto. Opening Jan. 16.

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Afterglow—In Alan Rudolph's romantic comedy-drama, two couples (Nick Nolte and Julie Christie, Lara Flynn Boyle and Jonny Lee Miller) unknowingly swap spouses. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Angelika Film Center and Regency.)

Amistad—The title ship was the site of an 1839 rebellion in which a gang of slaves overpowered the crew and demanded their return to Africa. The uprising provides Steven Spielberg with the first and most potent scene of his new picture; the violence is wonderfully balanced between brutishness and the lust for liberty, and the rest of the story flows from that mixture. The men are tricked into landing on the coast of Connecticut, and the audience, too, is in for a shock: from here on, the movie becomes a seminar on property law—where, and to whom, do the defendants belong? A young attorney (Matthew McConaughey) argues their case, which then proceeds to the Supreme Court, where the rebel leader (Djimon Hounsou) is represented by a former President, John Quincy Adams (Anthony Hopkins). Hounsou has forbidding presence—more than the hammy Hopkins—but there is only so much that Spielberg, for all his skill, can do to relieve the burden of the double courtroom drama, and this wordy, noble film runs dry of visual surprise. With Morgan Freeman as an abolitionist and Nigel Hawthorne as Martin Van Buren.—*Anthony Lane* (Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Arguing the World—The story is familiar: four brilliant young Jews met at City College of New York in the thirties, embraced socialism, broke with the Communists over Stalin, and splintered apart during the fifties and sixties, one to remain an independent thinker on the left, two to revolutionize American social theory, and one to become a founder of the neoconservative movement. Joseph Dorman's look at the careers of Irving Howe, Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, and Irving Kristol isn't much from a formal point of view, but it does give this decidedly intellectual topic a human face. Dorman walks his subjects back to their childhood homes in the Bronx and on the Lower East Side and gets them to cough up memories: Glazer admits that the parents of his generation never, ever told their children "I love you"; Howe (who died in 1993) sadly recalls how the young Tom Hayden struck him as a creep. It's all very moving, and illuminating in a gossipy sort of way, but Dorman succeeds better than he probably intended in making a heated period in American history seem romantic and remote.—*Sarah Kerr* (Film Forum; through Jan. 20.)

As Good as It Gets—A romantic comedy directed and co-written (with Mark Andrus) by James Brooks ("Terms of Endearment," "Broadcast News"), in which an improbable trio—quartet, if you count the dog—overcomes a heap of troubles and finds collective happiness, sitcom style. The movie stars Jack Nicholson as a romance novelist with an obsessive-compulsive disorder and a seriously alienating manner, Helen Hunt as a waitress burdened with a young son who has a life-threatening disease, and Greg Kinnear as a gay painter with a sweet smile and no visible erotic attachments (not to mention the dog, a Brussels griffon who links the threesome together with his big-eyed adorableness). Brooks's gleaming manipulativeness and trendy pieties may make you grumpy; you keep expecting to hear a laugh track.—*Daphne Merkin* (1/5/98) (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

Boogie Nights—Mark Wahlberg (once better known as Marky Mark) is a busboy who becomes the most successful product of the porn producer Jack Horner, played with a rangy bantam cock's swagger by Burt Reynolds. Wahlberg, who plays his part with baffled sweetness, is surrounded by the most interesting ensemble cast since "The Player," including William H. Macy, Julianne Moore, and Heather Graham. The picture is set in Los Angeles in the late seventies and early eighties, and, in the hands of the talented young director Paul Thomas Anderson, it gradually takes on the feel of a "Nashville"-like epic.—*D.M.* (10/13/97) (Eastside Playhouse and Village East Cinemas.)

The Boxer—Daniel Day-Lewis stars as an Irish fighter rebuilding his life after serving time in a British prison, in a drama directed by Jim Sheridan, who co-wrote the screenplay with Terry George. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Deconstructing Harry—Woody Allen casts himself as a famous Jewish novelist who ridicules and cheats on women and then appropriates their life stories for his fiction. As a director, Allen seems to be shooting for a new style of ruthless honesty: the film's tone is almost abusively dark. But clear away the pseudoprofound talk about the immorality of genius and all you're left with is a bunch of celebrity cameos and outdated gags.—*S.K.* (Cinema II, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Criterion Center, East 85th Street, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Emperor Jones (1933)—Eugene O'Neill's play about a black man's disintegration was conceived in a semi-Expressionist style, and it was filmed in that style by Dudley Murphy, from a screenplay by DuBose Heyward. Murphy, a director with ideas but almost no technique, used painted sets, exaggerated décor, and an artificial jungle; the effects are sometimes powerful, sometimes ridiculous. O'Neill's violent emotions are accurately rendered by Paul Robeson and Dudley Digges, though they seem to be acting on a stage.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum 2; Jan. 16-18.)

The Full Monty—An amiable light comedy, directed by Peter Cattaneo, about six unemployed British steelworkers who mount an all-male strip show for cash. The script, by Simon Beaufoy, is clean and well developed. Each character is given his bit to do, and when the motley crew comes together the actors all work wonderfully with one another, finding a sexy, warm performance rhythm as they gyrate to some classic seventies disco. Two actors—Mark Addy, who plays an overweight, insecure worker, and Robert Carlyle, as the ringleader—are sensational.—*Bruce Diones* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Good Will Hunting—A drama written by and starring Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, about a troubled young man with a photographic memory. Directed by Gus Van Sant. Also starring Robin Williams and Minnie Driver. (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea West, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, and State.)

House of Bamboo (1955)—This is one Samuel Fuller film that even Fuller-phobes can enjoy: the hard-guy overreaching is at a minimum and the exotic color and action at a maximum. The movie revolves around some misfit American veterans operating their own mob in Japan. Robert Stack plays a mysterious stranger, who cozies up to a dead gangster's widow (Shirley Yamaguchi) and then to the mob kingpin (Robert Ryan). At times the picture is like a robust B variation on "The Third Man"; it culminates in a spectacular showdown atop a futuristic Tokyo Ferris wheel. Harry Kleiner and Fuller wrote the script.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 15 and Jan. 17.)

I Can Get It for You Wholesale (1951)—Designer Susan Hayward must choose between instant success with a suave retail giant (George Sanders) and eventual success with her loyal and loving partners (Dan Dailey and Sam Jaffe) in their garment-district startup. However obvious the plot may be, the picture does remind you how rarely movies have exploited the volatile Seventh Avenue milieu. (Is it too close to the movie business for comfort?) The film is slick and denatured—despite a parade of ethnic stereotypes, the only Yiddish word we hear is "schnook"—but some juice still seeps through. Abraham Polonsky wrote the script, from Vera Caspary's adaptation of Jerome Weidman's novel. Michael Gordon directed.—*M.S.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Jan. 14 and Jan. 17.)

Jackie Brown—Despite the usual armory of guns and foul mouths, Quentin Tarantino's third movie marks a change in direction. Pam Grier plays a flight attendant who gets caught smuggling cash; the feds will be nice to her only if she helps them hook a bigger fish, an arms dealer named Ordell (Samuel L. Jackson). Also involved are Ordell's girl (Bridget Fonda), his shaggy friend (Robert De Niro), and a levelheaded bail bondsman (Robert Forster). Tarantino adapted the script from Elmore Leonard's novel "Rum Punch," and he's tuned straight into the Leonard wavelength, with its buzz of ambition and failure. The halting attempts at intimacy—notably between Grier and Forster—are something wholly new to Tarantino, and all the more touching for being so tacky. The movie is set in the present but infected with seventies chic; funk lovers will hear the soundtrack and weep.—*A.L.* (1/12/98) (84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, Gotham Cinema, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

Kundun—Martin Scorsese's chronicle of the early years of Tenzin Gyatso, the current Dalai Lama. (Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ Guild; starting Jan. 16.)

L.A. Confidential—Curtis Hanson's new thriller, set in Los Angeles in the early fifties, is about a group of cops who between them cover the full moral range, from the uptight integrity of Ed Exley (Guy Pearce) to the four-star sadism of Bud White (Russell Crowe). The plot, adapted from the James Ellroy novel, is both murky and tangled, yet the movie never bogs down. Hanson paces the tale with ease, decorating it with one neat performance after another: James Cromwell as the smiling police chief, David Strathairn as an oily pimp, Kim Basinger as one of his prize charges, and, better still, Kevin Spacey as a "celebrity crime-stopper" who gets dragged into the dark and dirty.—*A.L.* (9/22/97) (Art Greenwich Twin, Lincoln Square, and New York Twin.)

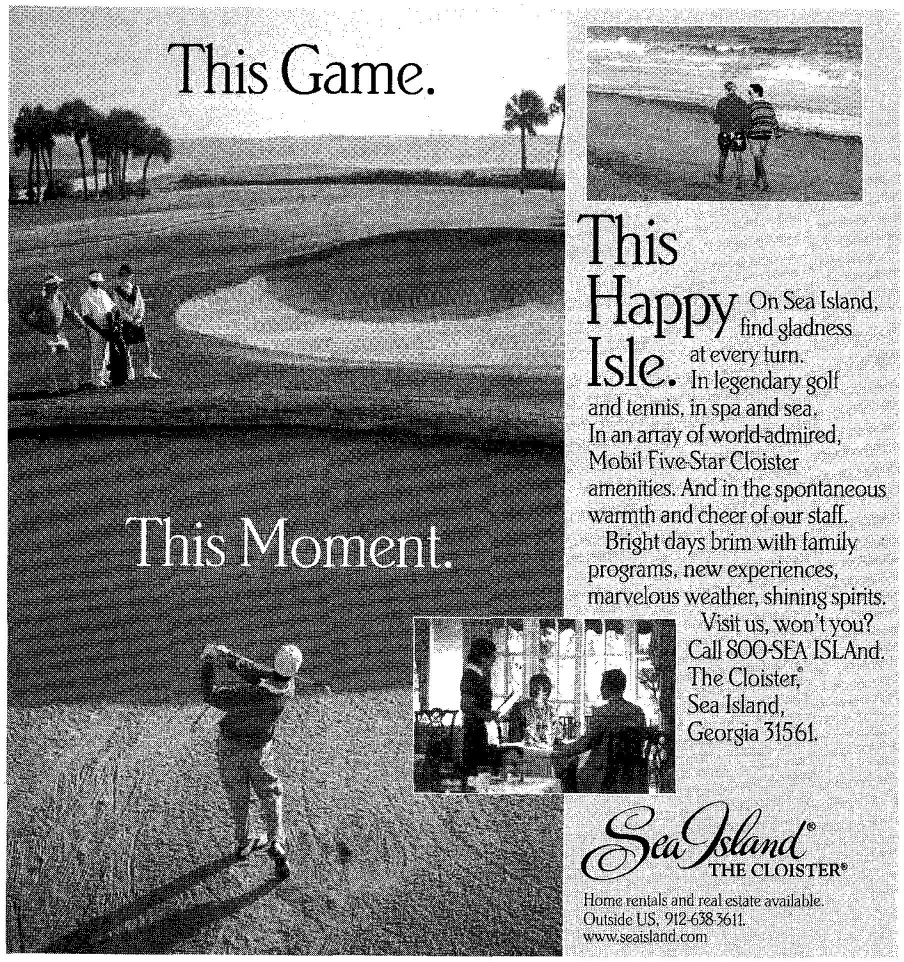
Once Is Not Enough (1975)—This adaptation of Jacqueline Susann's infatuated exposé of the scandalous goings on among celebrities wants so badly to be shocking and is actually so naïve that you begin to feel some affection for its silly sleaziness. The picture has its moments, such as George Hamilton, as a celebrated stud, luring a virgin named January Wayne (Deborah Raffin) into his lecher's pad, which is equipped with red couches, blazing fires, and a Sinatra record at the ready. The other stars include Brenda Vaccaro, David Janssen (who gives a surprisingly energetic performance as a Norman Mailer-like brawling writer), Kirk Douglas, and Alexis Smith and Melina Mercouri (who have an excruciating lesbian scene). Guy Green directed, unevenly.—*P.K.* (A Different Light Bookstore; Jan. 18.)

Oscar and Lucinda—The title of Gillian Armstrong's politely beautiful version of the Peter Carey novel refers to a pair of eccentric Victorians, the saintly Oscar (Ralph Fiennes) and the wealthy Lucinda (Cate Blanchett), who share vivid red hair and a weakness for gambling but never a bed. The theme of narrowly avoided love may have a certain delicacy on the page, but it leaves the film looking aimless: the characters' obsessions flare up out of nowhere, and the climactic journey, in which Oscar transports a glass church across the Australian outback, feels like a willful gesture toward the surreal. (Fortunately, both Blanchett and Fiennes stress the nervous comedy of the situation.) The movie may be lovely, but it doesn't play to Armstrong's strengths; wasn't this tale a natural for the more skewed vision of Jane Campion? With Ciaran Hinds and a voice-over narration by Geoffrey Rush.—*A.L.* (1/12/98) (Angelika Film Center, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 72nd Street East.)

The Sweet Hereafter—An exquisitely sober movie by Atom Egoyan, based on the novel by Russell Banks. Ian Holm holds the screen with volcanic force as a big-city lawyer trying to bring a class-action suit on behalf of a small blue-collar town in the wake of a school-bus accident. The cast is uniformly good, and Sarah Polley, as a paralyzed survivor of the crash, is extraordinary.—*D.M.* (11/24/97) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Titanic—At well over three hours, James Cameron's grand new picture has plenty of romance to get through before it breaks the vessel in half. Leonardo DiCaprio plays the freewheeling Jack, who wins a steerage ticket and finds himself falling for the wealthy Rose (Kate Winslet), to the disapproval of her mother (Frances Fisher) and her brute of a fiancé (Billy Zane). The social animus of the story, like its imaginative majesty, is Dickensian; this all feels like two hundred million dollars well spent.—*A.L.* (12/15/97) (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Tomorrow Never Dies—A game attempt by director Roger Spottiswoode to wring a little more life out of the James Bond series. Regular fans will be heartened by the presence of several familiar features: the menacing but, on closer inspection, entirely meaningless title; a plot that shows signs of subtlety during the first hour and then collapses into indiscriminate rubble; and the reassuring stack of homicidal toys provided by Q (Desmond Llewelyn). The most enviable toy is a remote-controlled B.M.W. that you drive with a small keypad; Pierce Brosnan, who plays Bond (for the second time), appears to be operated by the same mechanism. Also present are Jonathan Pryce (as a rather underpowered media tyrant), Teri Hatcher (as his doomed wife), and, most entertaining of all, Michelle Yeoh, who does stuff with her heels and elbows that 007 wouldn't dream of trying without a silencer. The trouble is that nobody takes a breather; when action sequences come as thick and fast as this, style—and with it the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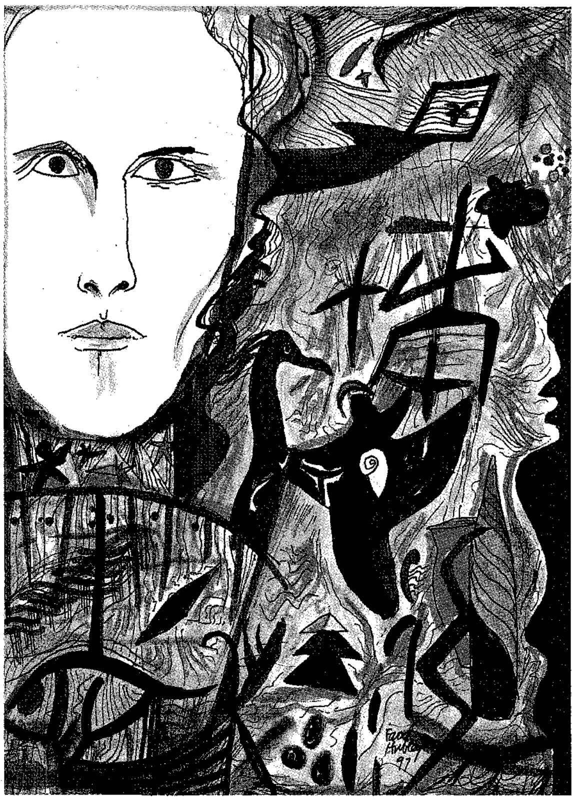

Self-portrait by Faith Hubley, whose short animated films are on the program at MOMA.

quaint old notion that Bond could be a source of cool—never gets a foot in the door.—*A.L.* (Chelsea West, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Wag the Dog—Barry Levinson's very savvy comedy about a very insider subject, the politics of spin control, from a screenplay by David Mamet (with Hilary Henkin as co-writer) which spews out innuendo. The premise, conceived with a shrewd awareness that there's no audience quite so lemminglike as one composed of cynical urban sophisticates, involves a Presidential incumbent caught in a sex scandal less than two weeks before Election Day. Robert De Niro plays a Machiavellian spinmeister who devises a fake war and hires a Hollywood producer (Dustin Hoffman) to orchestrate it. The movie is essentially one long joke about the American way of hype: it's very clever, but its tone of gleeful sendup never takes you beyond what you already know. Hoffman's role is the meatiest he's had since "Tootsie," and he gives it a complex, almost architectonic reading. With Anne Heche as a squeaky-clean Presidential aide.—*D.M.* (1/5/98) (Cinema I, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Welcome to Sarajevo—Michael Winterbottom's fine and splenetic movie stars Stephen Dillane as a British TV correspondent who finds himself becoming involved with a young Bosnian orphan (Emira Nusevic). The combination of Dillane's studious calm and Winterbottom's nervous anger propels the picture way beyond heartwarming. With Woody Harrelson as a hot-blooded American journalist, Marisa Tomei as an aid worker, and the excellent Goran Visnjic as the hero's driver.—*A.L.* (12/1/97) (62nd and Broadway and Village East Cinemas.)

The Winter Guest—In a small, frozen-over coastal town in Scotland, a mother and daughter (played by Emma Thompson and her real mother, Phyllida Law) spend a day together arguing and chatting, going from mutual exasperation to sudden bouts of fierce affection. The film is a character study imbued with the tender realism of a William Trevor story, and its slow, watchful quality makes everything seem worth paying attention to: the wonderful, washed-out colors of the town, the mournful cawing of seagulls, the pair of elderly women who follow funerals. The dialogue is like a translucent skin through which we make out the shifting play of emotions. Directed, with a great calmness of focus, by the actor Alan Rickman (who co-wrote the script with Sharman Macdonald), and featuring superb performances by both mother and daughter (Thompson restrains her tendency to oversell her characters), this picture has the lingering radiance of art.—*D.M.* (1/5/98) (Paris.)

ALSO PLAYING

Bean (reviewed in our issue of 11/24/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Firestorm:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Waverly. . . . **I Know What You Did Last Summer:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **In & Out:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **Ma Vie en Rose:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **Mousehunt:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 64th and 2nd, and Waverly. . . . **One Night Stand:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **The Postman:** Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Ziegfeld. . . . **Scream 2:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **Starship Troopers:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **The Wings of the Dove** (11/10/97): Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, and 59th Street East Cinema.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2 and 3, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—**Theatre 2:** Jan. 14-15: "A King in New York" (1957, Charlie Chaplin) and four short films with Chaplin. . . . ¶ Films starring Paul Robeson. Jan. 16-18: "The Emperor Jones" (†) and "Proud Valley" (1940, Pen Tennyson). . . . Jan. 19-20: "Body and Soul" (1924, Oscar Micheaux) and "Borderline" (1930, Kenneth McPherson). . . . **Theatre 3:** Through Jan. 15: "Fast, Cheap & Out of Control" (1997, Errol Morris). . . . From Jan. 16: "Don't Look Back" (1967, D. A. Pennebaker).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Jan. 15 at 2:30 and Jan. 17 at 5: "Run of the Arrow" (1956, Samuel Fuller). . . . Jan. 15 at 6 and Jan. 17 at 2: "House of Bamboo" (†). . . . Jan. 15 at 6:30 and Jan. 16 at 3: "Cela" (1996, Rafael Lewandowski). . . . Jan. 16 at 2:30 and Jan. 18 at 5: "Hell and High Water" (1954, Fuller). . . . Jan. 16 at 6 and Jan. 18 at 2:30: "A Lawless Street" (1955, Joseph H. Lewis). . . . Jan. 16 at 6 and 8, Jan. 17 at 2:30 and 5, Jan. 18 at 1 and 3, and Jan. 19 at 1, 3, and 5: Seven different programs of animated short films by Faith, Emily, and/or John Hubley. . . . Jan. 16 at 8: "The Big Combo" (1955, Lewis). . . . Jan. 19 at 2: "Joanna Enlists" (1918, William D. Taylor; silent) and "On Dangerous Ground" (1917, William Brady; silent). . . . Jan. 19 at 5: "Back Pay" (1922, Frank Borzage; silent) and "The Flapper" (1920, Alan Crosland; silent). . . . Jan. 20 at 12:30 and 6: "La Monnaie de l'Absolu" (1997; in French) and "La Contrôle de l'Univers" (1997; in French), two chapters in Jean-Luc Godard's "Histoire(s) du Cinéma.". . . Jan. 20 at 2:30: "Too Wise Wives" (1921, Lois Weber; silent). . . . Jan. 20 at 6: "Male and Female" (1919, Cecil B. De Mille; silent).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—The Seventh Annual New York Jewish Film Festival. Jan. 14 at 2 and Jan. 18 at 8:15: "East of War" (1996, Ruth Beckermann; in German). . . . Jan. 14 at 4:15 and Jan. 17 at 7: "I Can Get It for You Wholesale" (†). . . . Jan. 14 at 6: "Sterne" (1959, Konrad Wolf; in German). . . . Jan. 14 at 8:15: "Fragments * Jerusalem, Parts 4 and 5" (1986-96, Ron Havilio). . . . Jan. 15 at 2, Jan. 17 at 9:15, and Jan. 18 at 5:45: "The Castle" (1997, Michael Haneke; in German). . . . Jan. 15 at 4:30: "None Shall Escape" (1944, André de Toth). . . . Jan. 15 at 6:15: "Soleil" (1997, Roger Hanin; in French). . . . Jan. 15 at 8:15: "Fragments * Jerusalem, Parts 6 and 7.". . . Jan. 18 at 2: "The Cross" (1921, Boris Orlicky; a Czech silent film). . . . Jan. 18 at 3:45: "The Master Race" (1944, Herbert Biberman). . . . Jan. 19 at 2: "Chants of Sand and Stars" (1997, Nicolas Klotz; in French). . . . Jan. 19 at 4: "The Boy with Green Hair" (1948, Joseph Losey). . . . Jan. 19 at 6: "Greta" (1997, Haris Pasovic; in Serbo-Croatian). . . . Jan. 19 at 8:30 and Jan. 20 at 2: "Rothschild's Violin" (1996, Edgardo Cozarinsky; in French). . . . Jan. 20 at 4:15 and 8:30: "From Hell to Hell" (1990, Dmitri Astrakhan; in German). . . . Jan. 20 at 7: "Judith Simon" (1916, Adolf Mérai; an Austro-Hungarian silent film). . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 6:30 and Jan. 17 at 4: Three episodes from the television series "You Are There."

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films. On Jan. 18 at 7, the feature will be "Once Is Not Enough" (†).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Jan. 20 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Nelly and Monsieur Arnaud" (1996, Claude Sautet; in French).

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, 2, and 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

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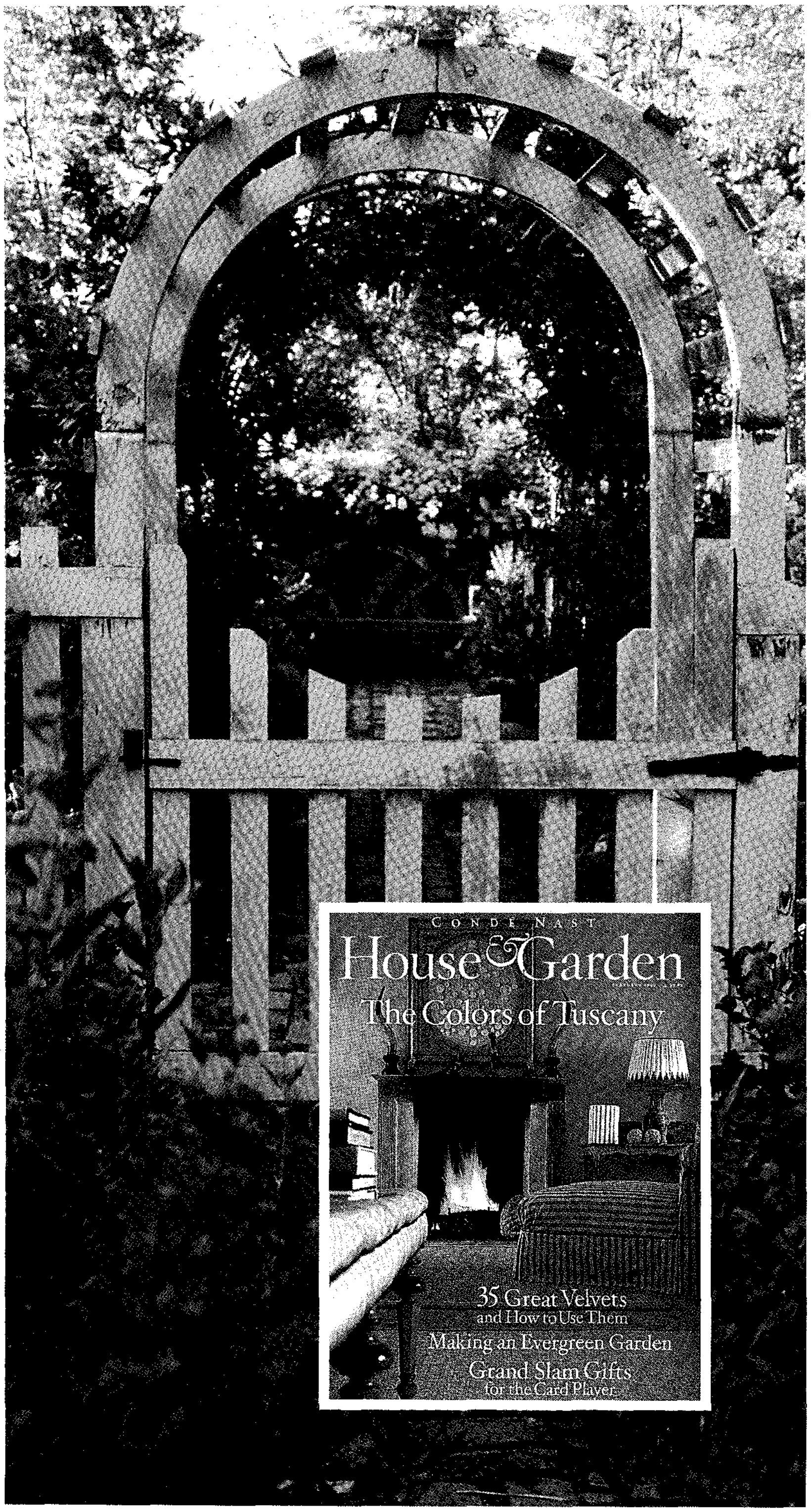

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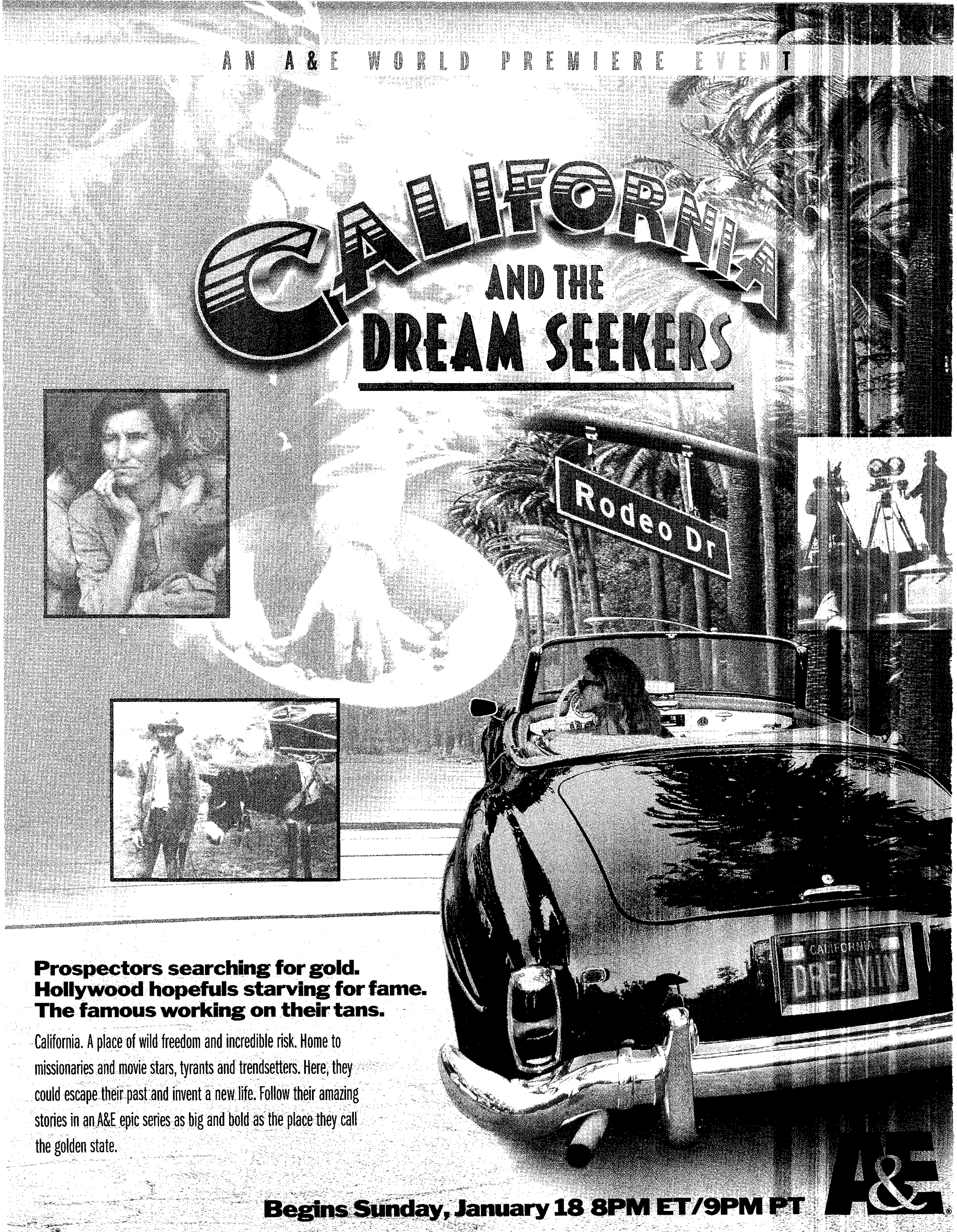
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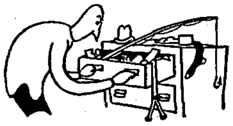
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

GOING, GOING . . .

A sale of John F. Kennedy's effects raises the question: Who owns J.F.K.?



With relics of the celebrated attracting the kind of worshipful (and lucrative) attention once visited upon the bones of the saints, the announcement of a public auction of objects once belonging to the late John F. Kennedy hardly comes as a surprise. The auction, to be held by Guernsey's auction house on March 18th and 19th, will include a diary kept by J.F.K. in 1951; the Flash II, a twenty-two-foot sailboat owned by the teen-age J.F.K.; the President's Hermès briefcase; his long johns; and Jacqueline Kennedy's will, dated January 11, 1960, and addressed to Evelyn Lincoln, J.F.K.'s personal secretary. In the event that "we don't arrive back from Jamaica," the will instructs, Caroline Kennedy "should go to live with her father's youngest brother Edward M. Kennedy and his wife Joan."

Arlen Ettinger, the president of Guernsey's, hopes that this sale will be more historically significant than the 1996 Sotheby's auction of Jacqueline Onassis's knickknacks. Unlike the Jackie auction, however, most of the objects on offer by Guernsey's come not from the Kennedy family but from private collectors. Roughly a quarter of the items come from Robert White, who was in the news recently for authenticating hundreds of documents that purportedly passed between J.F.K. and the attorney Lawrence X. Cusack. Those documents are almost certainly fakes, and the upcoming sale of White's J.F.K. memorabilia promises to be controversial as well. Attorneys for the Kennedy Library and the Kennedy family suggest that the auction may soon be contested in court.

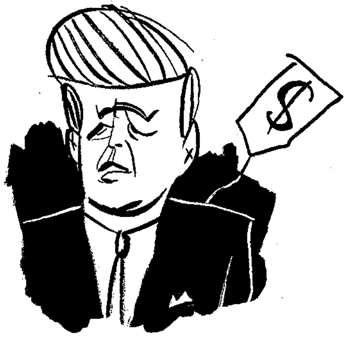
ILLUSTRATION BY TOM BACHTELL

Besides the items in the auction, White's massive collection, which he keeps in his mother's basement in Maryland, includes White House Dictabelt tapes from the Cuban missile crisis, used by Seymour Hersh in "The Dark Side of Camelot"; tapes of J.F.K. reading bedtime stories to his daughter; a love letter from Jacqueline Kennedy to J.F.K. written from Aristotle Onassis's yacht after the death of their infant son; and a bloodstained swatch of the seat of the limousine in which J.F.K. was shot. White obtained many of these items from Evelyn Lincoln, over the course of an unlikely decades-long friendship. How Lincoln obtained the items could be an issue if the sale is challenged in court.

According to White, his relationship with Mrs. Lincoln began with a letter he wrote to her when J.F.K. was still alive, expressing his admiration for the President and asking for memorabilia. Lincoln and her husband, Harold, were childless, and they made a practice of befriending younger people such as White, who impressed them with his devotion to the slain President. "I'm here in Dallas to spend an emotional few days," White wrote in a 1992 postcard. "I will say a prayer for you at 12:30-Nov. 22nd."

Although White certainly cultivated his odd relationship with the Lincolns, there are indications that Evelyn Lincoln found the friendship beneficial as well. "I'd say it was more of a business relationship than a friendship," said Francis McGuire, a friend of the Lincolns who is named in their will. Another friend remembers how, in exchange for "very small sums of money, a few hundred bucks at most," Lincoln discreetly sold White memorabilia for his collection with the understanding that the items would not be resold. When the Lincolns died, in 1995, six weeks apart, they left most of their estate to friends. A locked file cabinet, a rocking chair that had belonged to J.F.K., and "Kennedy memorabilia" were left to Robert White.

Within months of the Lincolns' death, however, White was drawn into a conflict over his inheritance. A woman named Maria Ray, who was named as the residual beneficiary of the Lincolns' will, filed a petition to have the executor of their estate, a friend of the couple named Stephen Blakeslee, removed. Ray believed that White ended up with various objects that had been intended for her (including a silver Tiffany plaque commemorating the Cuban missile crisis). Asked about how he distributed objects not mentioned in the will, Blakeslee said, "As the executor, I felt I had certain discretion to say, 'Hey, I think these are yours.' "



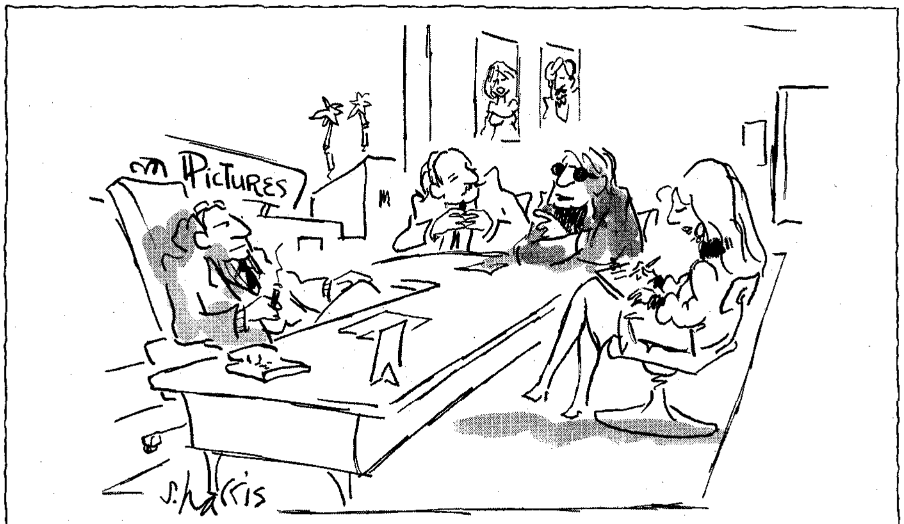
When White produced letters signed by Harold Lincoln itemizing memorabilia he had given White, Ray and her lawyer consulted a pair of forensic examiners, Richard Orsini and Kathie Koppenhaver, who concluded that the Harold Lincoln signatures on the documents they examined looked like forgeries. White, for his part, found his own expert to defend the signatures. In any case, the matter was settled, with Ray replacing Blakeslee as executor and dropping her claim to the disputed items. Though Maryland law requires appraisers to be "disinterested," White participated in the inventory and appraisal of the Lincoln estate, which enabled him to examine, in Blakeslee's presence, the trunks earmarked for other beneficiaries, including the Kennedy

Library. White has refused to discuss the Lincoln estate.

Members of the Kennedy family remain puzzled by how, exactly, John Kennedy's watch, tapes of meetings during the Cuban missile crisis, and other personal and historical items wound up with Evelyn Lincoln to begin with. Guernsey's is in possession of a letter on White House stationery, dated April 5, 1989, and addressed "Dear Robert," in which the President's former secretary tells of objects given to her by her boss, and other items "saved from extinction by me . . . even from the wastebasket." The letter also describes an odd rummage-sale-style giveaway, held by Jackie Kennedy at the Averell Harriman home in Georgetown, just after the assassination. "Dresses, yard goods, all kinds of clothing belonging to the President, herself and her children, etc. were piled high on long tables," the letter reads. "In several boxes and wicker baskets lining the walls were cast off jewelry, memorabilia, gifts. . . . Mrs. Kennedy invited me, among the first of many of her friends, to come to that room and choose anything I wanted. . . . I carried away many, many very personal items." Members of J.F.K.'s circle, including Theodore Sorensen, Benjamin Bradlee, and former White House secretary Sue Vogelsinger, have no memory of the giveaway Lincoln describes.

Friends of the Kennedy family say that John F. Kennedy, Jr., and Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg are disturbed by the idea of their father's effects being sold at auction. Apparently, last year White offered to sell Schlossberg a love letter written by her mother, which is not part of the Guernsey's sale. According to a family friend, White asked for several hundred thousand dollars. The offer was declined. "This is a distressing situation for them, apart from history and all the rest of it," Paul Kirk, an official with the Kennedy Library Foundation, said. Calling the auction "disgusting," Kirk added, "You can count on the fact that legitimate and serious questions will be raised in appropriate venues."

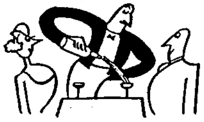
The Kennedys aren't the only ones who are distressed. "Mrs. Lincoln would feel so betrayed you could hardly describe it," said her friend Frank McGuire. "She trusted Robert White. I think her reaction to his selling the President's effects at auction would be akin to the assassination itself." —DAVID SAMUELS



"You want the gimmick? Here's the gimmick. Kevin Costner won't produce it, he won't direct it, and he won't star in it."

TABLE TALK

Too many cooks fiddle with the punctuation at a Manhattan institution.



LONG before 44 and Fifty-Seven Fifty Seven, 150 Wooster and Arizona 206, Bar 89 and Ñ 33 Crosby, East of Eighth and Eighteenth and Eighth, there was only one address in town: 21 West Fifty-second Street, better known as "21," or, as regulars once called it, "the numbers."

As newcomers—27 Standard and 2 Seven 7, Jet 19 and Restaurant 147—play out their own numbers game, a symptom of the neologistic minimalism that has overtaken the city's night life, it appears that little has changed at "21," the former speakeasy famous for the lawn jockeys that guard its iron-gated entrance. Few people seem to have noticed recent tamperings with the restaurant's logo. The quotation marks that have quizzically framed the "21" since 1930 have been quietly replaced by a pair of jockeys. There they are, evident to all, at the top of "21" 's menu—a subtle adjustment that has been effected since Orient-Express Hotels took charge of the restaurant.

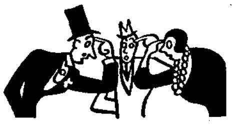
Bryan McGuire, "21" 's chief operating officer, admits that when he writes the restaurant's name he still adds the quotation marks. "It's force of habit," he says. "Besides, you can't draw two lawn jockeys every time." Making things more confusing is the fact that food publications, including the new 1998 edition of the Zagat Survey, continue to bracket "21" with double quotation marks, even though back in 1985, after Marshall Cogan acquired the restaurant, he made the Anglophile gesture of replacing the double quotes with single ones.

No one seems to know why the quotes were put there in the first place, but most people think that they should have stayed. "They give the numbers definition and distinction, single or double," says Marilyn Kaytor, the author of " '21': The Life and Times of New York's Favorite Club." And Chip Kidd, the noted book-jacket designer, says, "They invite inquiry. They're like the mysterious '33' on Rolling Rock beer bottles." He adds, "It's as if the original owners were harbingers of irony-speak. They were *way* ahead of their time."

—STEVE GARBARINO

EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES DEPT.

If your navel ring's too showy, here's a discreet new option.



JANINE LOPIANO-MISDOM does not look like a professional expert on avant-garde youth style: the other day in her Chelsea loft office, she was wearing a Gap denim shirt and two-year-old Reeboks. The tape she was sliding into the VCR, however, showed a character possessed of a rather more rarefied aesthetic. A young man was fondling a prodigious bump under the skin of his forehead. The bump was, he explained, a miniature metal barbell. “You get a little incision and they slide in the bar with the little nuts at the end. They put it under your skin and it just sits there,” he explained, in a no-big-deal kind of voice.

This, according to Misdom, is the next thing that suburban parents will have to worry about their kids bringing home from the East Village. As the co-founder of Sputnik, a market-research firm that investigates the tastes of forward-thinking young people, Misdom is paid by clients such as Pepsi and Reebok to be right about these things. (In 1994, Sputnik predicted the increased interest in aliens, since demonstrated by the popularity of “The X-Files.”) The implants, which are made from surgical steel, titanium, or gold, can be done anyplace skin is loose enough to be pinchable: not just on the forehead but on the back of the hand and in other, more gruesome spots. Misdom, who, with her partner, Joanne De Luca, has just written a book called “Street Trends,” says that, with pierced eyebrows and navels everywhere these days, subcutaneous jewelry is the new frontier. “Pierced people are tired of the gawking and the copycatting,” she said. “This way, they can do it, but you don’t necessarily see it.” What you do see is a boil-like bulge, the kind of thing more conventional folks spend a fortune having removed.

The hidden-jewelry trend is, Misdom said, part of a new “clean” movement—away from the conspicuous consumption (Martinis, cigars, Gucci) that has recently characterized youth culture. According to Misdom, the flashy-eighties nostalgia you were just coming to grips with is already being supplanted by nostalgia for the more earnest early nineties: grunge, poetry readings, and raves are back, though with a late-nineties twist (fewer drugs this time around, apparently). Concealed jewelry is part of the return to a stripped-down minimalist look. Doubtless someone in Calvin Klein’s advertising department is even now tracking down an androgynous youth with a bumpy forehead to suspend high above Times Square. —Rebecca Mead

POSTSCRIPT

Veronica Geng, a gifted writer, editor, and critic, whose short humorous pieces were touched with genius, died on Christmas Eve, of a brain tumor. She was fifty-six, though she seemed younger. For all her adult life, from her twenties to her fifties, she had the air of a woman of urbane mystery—a witty, slinky temptress of, say, thirty-seven, with a taste for intrigue, a low, smoky voice, and “a complexion so transparent you could read Proust through it.” In the nineteen-forties clothes she picked up at flea markets and made new, she was like the heroine of one of the noirish films she loved.

After growing up in a German-Irish neighborhood in Philadelphia, Veronica knocked around New York as a Grub Street freelance, writing gal advice for *Cosmopolitan* under a giveaway pseudonym, Phyllis Penn. In 1975, when she was thirty-four, she published a parody of Pauline Kael in the *New York Review of Books*. The parody was brilliant, and more loving than lethal. Veronica wasn’t the kind of satirist who takes no prisoners—on the contrary, she had whole camps full of P.O.W.s, some of whom defected to her. (Kael became one of her closest friends.)

From 1976 to 1993, Veronica was on the staff of *The New Yorker*. She became a master of what in the office were called “casuals”—playful pieces ranging from a few lines to a few pages, usually working out some comic premise, or, better, several such premises at odd angles to each other. At her best—in pieces like “My Mao,” “Love Trouble Is My Business” (that “read Proust” line is from this one), and “Teaching Poetry Writing to Singles”—she was the equal of the genre’s best practitioners, who include S. J. Perelman, Robert Benchley, and Dorothy Parker. And, as a film and book reviewer, Veronica was a rarity: a critic even more eloquent in praise than in damnation.

JAMES HAMILTON

“This was a voice to crawl into,” she once wrote gleefully, apropos of finding something ripe for parody. Her talent for literary ventriloquism, fused with her gift for generous, highly specific appreciation of the work of others, made her a magical editor. She could make a piece of writing better in its own terms and in its writer’s own voice—as opposed to making it better according to a generic set of high standards, which is not so hard and not so rare. She was passionate, mercurial, and tremblingly fierce in her opinions about writing (as she was in her friendships), which was trying, but in the end inspiring, for her editorial colleagues. She championed the work of writers like William Trevor and Raymond Carver, and the many writers who were grateful for her patient empathy included Philip Roth, Ian Frazier, Jamaica Kincaid, Tom Drury, and Roy Blount, Jr., who were also her friends.

Veronica’s departure from *The New Yorker*, after a squabble heavy with misunderstanding, was messy and sad. A sinkhole of anger opened, and only deepened over time. She disliked many of the changes the magazine was introducing. Yet her contribution to it (as it was, and, though she would bitterly dispute this, as it is) endures. So does the tart taste of her words. In “Post-Euphoria,” a casual that came out too late to be included in either of her two collections (it was published in the issue of September 30, 1991), the premise is clueless Russians asking Westerners for advice. The piece begins,

> Frankfurt Stock Exchange
> Frankfurt, Germany
> Dear Sirs:
>
> Specifically speaking, how does a stock exchange work? One would require approximately how many tables and chairs? And then what?

It ends in a couplet that captures something more broadly poignant than the troubles of the ex-Soviet Union:

> To Whom It May Concern:
> I am free. What should I do?

—Hendrik Hertzberg

THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

THE DIGITAL BUBBLE

Waking up from the new-media pipe dream.

BY KURT ANDERSEN

I SPEND half my waking hours sitting at a monitor and keyboard, fiddling with words. Eight times today, I mouse-clicked through a high-speed phone line onto the Internet, where I searched the Nexis database of newspaper articles and plucked a description of seventeenth-century Manhattan domestic life out of a university archive. A computer is as close to indispensable as any machine I own. It's no wonder, then, that the press—which is to say me multiplied by thousands—has been preternaturally inclined to sing the praises of digital technology.

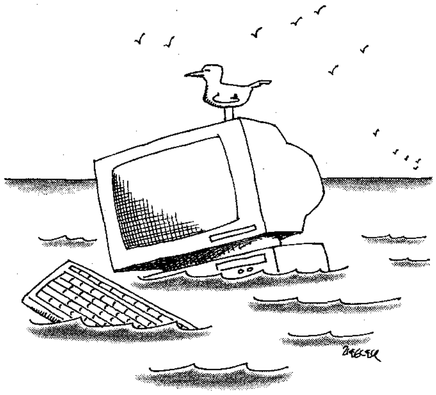
The only professional caste as profoundly computer-dependent as the media is Wall Street. Traders and analysts require infusions of fresh data—all day, every day—on earnings and share prices and interest rates. It's no wonder, then, that Wall Street has been preternaturally inclined to sing the praises of digital technology.

What journalists and financial professionals haven't understood, however, is that almost no one else finds computers and the Internet quite so essential. And as a result of this improbable accident of history—giddy journalists and giddy money managers enthralled at the same moment by the same new gadgetry—the technology now sits at the center of a speculative frenzy of religious intensity, a financial mania, a bubble.

Last year, I heard a respected entrepreneur say about a digital start-up enterprise, "Even if it doesn't make money in the sense of *earnings*, the market cap will move capital into the business." That is classic bubble double-talk: If speculators invest money in a failing business, the business thereby becomes a success. America in the nineteen-nineties is not Holland in the sixteen-thirties, but the market valuation of the on-line Internet guide Yahoo!—$2.7 billion, or a hundred and sixty times its earnings—could one day seem as nutty as a forty-two-hundred-gulden Viseroij tulip bulb.

The digital bubble may be bursting already. Since summer, the market capitalizations of Microsoft and Intel have fallen ten and nearly thirty per cent, respectively. Just last week, the value of the Web-browser company Netscape declined more than twenty per cent, to just about its lowest point ever.

We should have been skeptical when, around 1993, "evangelist" became a regular job title in the software business. The media most intensely thrilled by the digital revolution, such as *Wired* and *Fast Company*, are produced by secular missionaries, baby boomers dedicated to their lifelong faith in sexy generational exceptionalism: laptops and fax modems are the reefer and long hair of this overcaffeinated age.

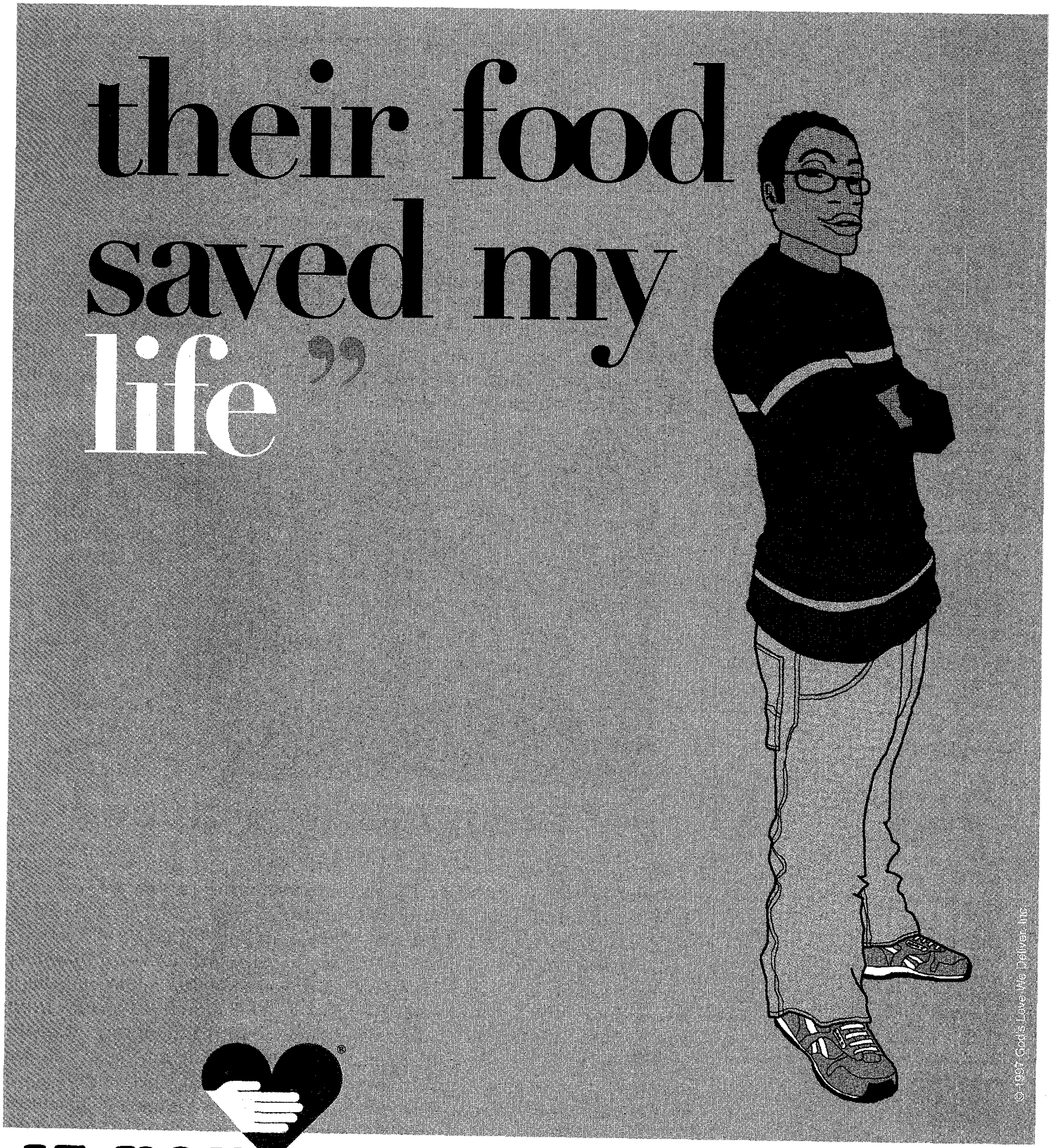


JACK ZIEGLER

The irrational exuberance of the media now propels not just a credulous cover story here and a cheerleaderish special section there but profligate online giveaways of expensive journalism. Why do network-news divisions spend tens of millions of dollars a year on Web sites that generate a pittance in advertising revenue? A year ago, I spent fifteen or twenty dollars a week at newsstands for the Washington *Post*, the New York *Post*, the *News*, and the *Times*. Why do the publishers of all those papers (and of magazines) now let me read them free, on the Web? They justify the practice vaguely as brand protection and R. & D., but the reasons look more like confused mixtures of vanity and panic. It's a particularly crazy kind of gas war: they're giving the product away not to maintain market share or to crush a competitor across the street but because—well, it's new, and, you know, everybody else is doing it. It's strange: in this era of unsentimental hypercapitalism, wishfulness and peer-group pressure rule. One veteran new-media executive told me recently, "I don't think anyone has a sustainable business plan." Financial and sports information are the most natural fits for the medium, both because timeliness is crucial and because they are more about data than about prose. The *Wall Street Journal* brags about its electronic edition's hundred and fifty thousand subscribers, the largest paid on-line circulation by far. But it's charging only forty-nine dollars a year, less than a third of the price of the paper version. The other putative on-line success story, ESPN SportsZone, has five million users a month, but only a minuscule fraction of those users pay for the service.

Slate, Microsoft's on-line magazine, is about to begin charging readers. Its founder, Michael Kinsley, won't specify a paid-circulation goal, but a *Slate* staff member told me that fifteen thousand subscribers is the (arbitrary) target. "We don't want to be Bill Gates's charity," Kinsley says. "But I have never had any discussion with Microsoft to suggest any time limit on this experiment." So *Slate* is definitely a for-profit enterprise, but a for-profit enterprise under no obligation ever to make a profit? "It may be a distinction without a difference," Kinsley concedes.

Louis Rossetto has been an avatar of the digital bubble, both as a journalist (he co-founded *Wired*) and as a would-be Wall Street conjurer (in 1996, he tried and failed to get the stock market to value Wired Ventures at four hundred million dollars). Having helped whip up the general overexcitement, he is now sensibly moving beyond it. Running through millions of dollars on Web-site R. & D. has convinced him that real journalism doesn't belong on line at all. "The Web is not about reading," he says. "It's not about developing long ideas. It's about getting to mission-critical information"—by which he means a journalist downloading a Nexis fact on deadline, say, or a stock trader pricing March puts on his Bloomberg screen. "It turns out that euphoria," Rossetto told me from his car phone last week, the morning after *Wired's* fifth-anniversary party, "is not a business strategy." ♦


their food saved my life”

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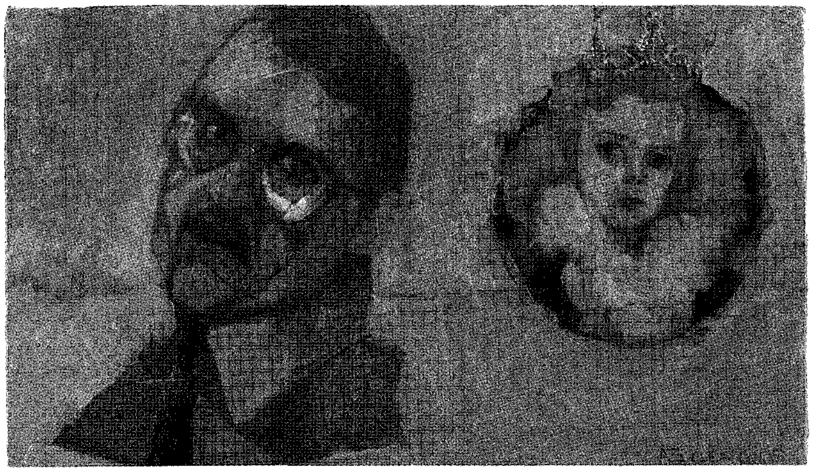
ANNALS OF CRIME

JUSTICE BOULDER STYLE

Why the District Attorney hasn't indicted JonBenét Ramsey's parents for her murder.

BY LAWRENCE SCHILLER



"The cops became so convinced that the Ramseys did it that they've never looked at the evidence objectively," Hunter says.

N. ASCENCIOS

Now that winter has settled in on the high plateau of Boulder, Colorado, and the aspen trees are bare, every street in town has a view of the Front Range of the snow-covered Rockies. Modest brick and wood-frame houses bask in bright reflected light. Boulder is an old-fashioned small town of ninety thousand people, isolated both by geography and by municipal planning, and the quiet and safety of its pretty neighborhoods is integral to its self-image. The activity over on Fifteenth Street does not fit the picture.

A half-acre lot on Fifteenth Street, six blocks southwest of the University of Colorado's main campus, is the site of the former home of Patsy and John Ramsey. The Ramseys moved back to Atlanta in July, while Lockheed Martin was negotiating the sale of the billion-dollar computer company that John Ramsey headed. Their Tudor mini-mansion was put on the market, and it now sits dark and empty in the cold winter air, the focus of attention by tourists, who gawk and take pictures. Traffic was particularly heavy the day after Christmas. It was the first anniversary of the day the Ramseys' six-year-old daughter, JonBenét, was found to be missing from the house, apparently the victim of a kidnapping, and was then discovered dead in a basement storeroom, with duct tape over her mouth and a garrote around her neck. Fifty-odd friends and neighbors who commemorated the occasion with a candlelight vigil were nearly outnumbered by reporters and TV crews. A few days earlier, Susannah Chase, a University of Colorado student from Connecticut, had been bludgeoned to death in an alley near her apartment by an unknown assailant wielding a baseball bat, but that homicide didn't get much national attention. It was the unsolved murder of JonBenét Ramsey that had captured the imagination of the media.

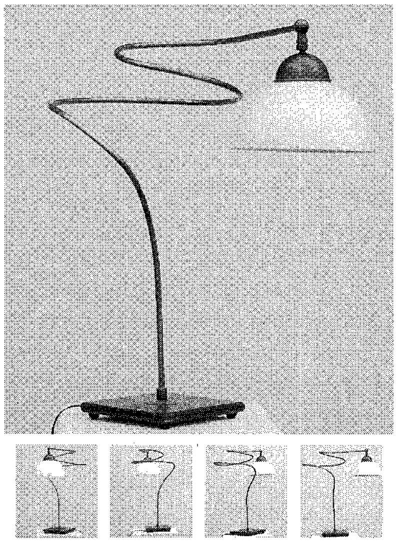
The level of interest in JonBenét's death has been remarkably steady ever since the airing of the videotape showing her in sexually suggestive poses at a child beauty pageant. As the months wore on without an arrest, the Ramseys appeared almost weekly on the front pages of every tabloid in the country. Early in December, the *Globe* published "America's Verdict!," a feature in which readers expressed the prevailing vox pop, which is essentially that Dad did it and Mom helped cover up the crime by writing the ransom note; or that Mom went into a homicidal rage at her daughter's recurrent bed-wetting ("In my opinion, the wife snapped"); or that JonBenét's ten-year-old brother, Burke, is the killer and his parents are protecting him ("Poor kid, he must have hated her!"). The *Globe* also published several fairly far-out versions of the "intruder" theory (e.g., "Based on all the evidence, I feel the Little Beauty pageants are a part of a larger, organized child abduction ring and a front for things like child pornography").

From the beginning, the public's frustration over the absence of an arrest was exacerbated by squabbling between the Boulder police and the district attorney's office, which were stuck in a morass of surly accusations, stalemates, shifting alliances, and contravening orders about the handling and sharing of evidence. In October, Commander John Eller, who led the police investigation, was replaced. A month later, the police chief, Tom Koby, announced that he was planning an early retirement. The only person still firmly in place among the key people in the investigation is Alex Hunter, the sixty-one-year-old District Attorney of Boulder County. Hunter didn't agree with Eller early on that the Ramseys should be arrested, and he has been much more cautious than the police in speculating about who the perpetrator is. As a consequence, he has been accused of incompetence, cowardice, and partiality toward the Ramseys' well-connected attorneys. This disturbs him. "In all my political life, these kinds of allegations have never been raised before," he says. "There is a shadow hanging over me. People are taking shots at what I think may be one of the best, if not the best, efforts at the very difficult goal of getting as close to justice as you can." Hunter says adamantly that "the case against the Ramseys is unfilable" thus far; that is, that it couldn't be proved to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt. The First Assistant District Attorney, Bill Wise, agrees with his boss, although he admits that he once felt reasonably confident—maybe eighty-five per cent sure—that a case could be made against the parents. Now, he says, "I'm not at a forty, but I'm down in the sixties." Should Hunter ultimately file against the Ramseys, he will have to declare which pieces of evidence point to which defendant. And that is something that Hunter knows he cannot do. "The Ramseys would be out on bail within hours," he says.

THE majority of child homicides are committed at home by parents, relatives, or people responsible for taking care of the victims, which means that DNA, fingerprints, and almost every other type of physical evidence from the chief suspects are all over the crime scene. The suspects live or work there, and evidence of their presence is not a clue to anything. This makes for a forensic nightmare, but, even so, in the Ramsey case "the cops felt they had a slam dunk," Hunter recalls. "In those first weeks we thought we had semen [on JonBenét's body], and then we learned we didn't. That changed the case drastically." Incest was no longer a likely motive. The coroner had found "chronic irritation" to the girl's vaginal tissues, but that did not necessarily prove sexual abuse. "Digital penetration" was the phrase the experts used when they evaluated the autopsy report. The penetration could have been accomplished with a finger or some object, and masturbation is not uncommon in a child JonBenét's age. Her pediatrician, Dr. Francesco Beuf, said that he had never seen any evidence that she was being sexually abused. She was a chronic bed wetter, and seemed to have incontinence problems, which could have caused the irritation.

Alex Hunter says that there is nothing in the background of either John or Patsy Ramsey that indicates the pathology usually associated with this kind of murder. He says that family history, parental behavior, JonBenét's school activities, and the child's personality are not typical of cases of child abuse. Patsy was a regular volunteer at the children's school, and the family were devout members of St. John's Episcopal Church. Despite the fact that he travelled frequently on business, John Ramsey impressed friends and neighbors as a devoted father.

"There is nothing negative in this child's life—not even one instance of



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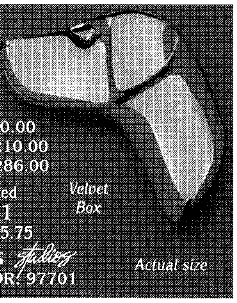

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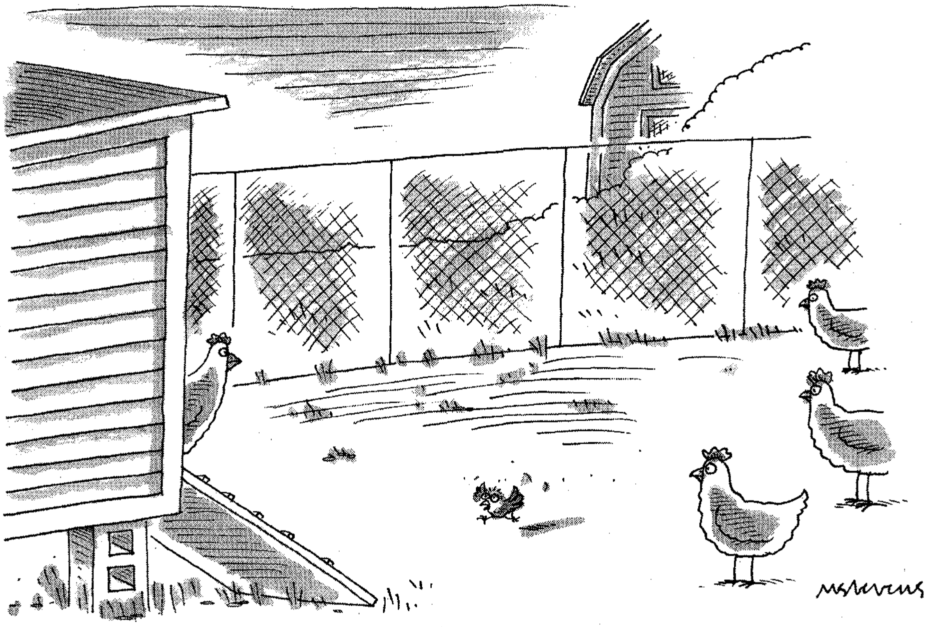
a slap in a supermarket," Hunter says. "Of course, for the media and the general public, the fact that Patsy Ramsey"—who was Miss West Virginia in 1977—"had JonBenét do the pageant stuff makes them think that she is an evil mother. People are angry, and they have a right to that emotion—a child has been killed. But they're also angry that the Ramseys bleached her hair. . . . The public may be seeing the Ramseys more as prime suspects than we are. I've never before seen anything like the battery upon these people who, wealthy or not, are not receiving the presumption of innocence. And I am troubled by that." Nevertheless, Commander Eller, who had not previously headed a murder investigation, insisted that there was no hard evidence that anyone other than the family was in the house the night JonBenét died. And the Ramseys' uncoöperative behavior in the early months of the investigation fortified the sentiment against them. "The cops became so convinced that the Ramseys did it," Hunter says, "that they've never been able to look at the evidence objectively."

Eller seemed to be making it clear from the outset that, in defiance of long-standing local custom, he was in control and didn't want the D.A. involved in the investigation. Bill Wise remembers him as "very confrontational." But, as Wise points out, Eller was within his rights in keeping Hunter's office at arm's length. Nothing in the law says that they have to be included at this point. On the other hand, the D.A. would have to prosecute the case if one were brought. "He needs to understand what he's going to have to face in court," Bob Grant, a law-and-order D.A. from neighboring Adams County, says. If the Ramseys are charged, "the defense attorneys in place are excellent—excellent lawyers with an excellent ability to take each and every comma and turn it into a period." The Ramseys have the money to buy a defense team like that of O. J. Simpson if they need to, and Hunter has been determined from the start not to "small-town" the case. In February, while the police were still refusing to accept outside help—not even the Denver Police mobile-crime lab—he retained Dr. Henry Lee, a Connecticut criminologist whose readings of crime scenes are legendary. Lee, who had worked for the O. J. defense, was one of the first observers to point out that JonBenét's death could have been an accident. "If it starts out as an accident, then becomes a coverup," Hunter explains, "you must look at the same eight hundred pieces of evidence differently: an accidental killing and a premeditated coverup."

UNDER Mark Beckner, who replaced Commander Eller in October, the police now seem to be taking a broader look at the case, which is what Hunter has been urging all along. At a press conference in December, Beckner noted that his task force still has forty-four items that require completion. On his to-do list is re-interviewing John and Patsy Ramsey and formally interviewing their son, Burke. There are several clues that were apparently not pursued on Eller's watch, and some of them could point to an intruder scenario—that is, that someone from outside the house killed the child. DNA that is not from the parents was found on the body, and police are now taking swab samples from the inside of people's mouths. "Even though it's a long shot," Hunter says, "if a swab sample did provide a DNA match to the DNA taken from JonBenét's body then police would be able to connect a second person to the murder." Such a connection might disclose the origin of another clue that has remained a mystery since the autopsy. Dark fibres found on JonBenét's labia may not be consistent with anything owned by the Ramseys. Similarly, two types of shoe prints, one found near the body on the first day of the investigation, do not match any footwear known to belong to the Ramseys.

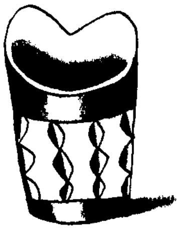
The most curious clue to have become public in the past month is the possible use of a stun gun in JonBenét's death. Marks on the child's body gained significance when Lou Smit, one of Hunter's special investigators, examined the autopsy photographs. The coroner had noticed a tiny "superficial abrasion" on JonBenét's chin and two more on her lower back. Smit linked these marks to another abrasion on the chin, and saw that the two sets of marks were nearly identical. Each set consisted of round, "rust-colored to slightly purple" discolorations of unequal size. They were symmetrical, and there was about the same amount of space between the marks on the chin and those on the lower back. They looked like the marks left by the two electrodes of a stun gun, a small device, about the size of the remote control for a television set. Stun guns are used primarily by police and security officers to immobilize people with a charge of electricity.

The Ramseys have denied to police that they ever possessed such a weapon. "This is the kind of thing that some



"The flu is coming! The flu is coming!"

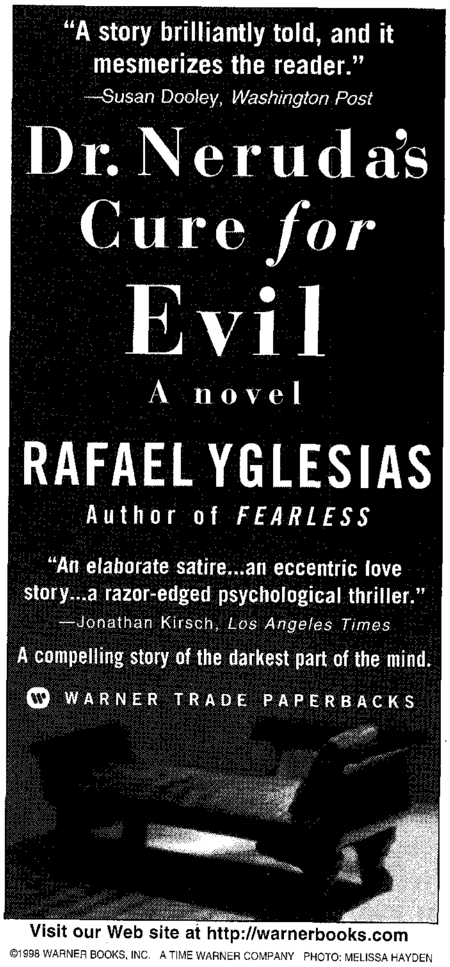
psychopath does," Hal Haddon, John Ramsey's attorney, told the Denver *Post*. "This is not the kind of weapon that some parent uses either in a fit of rage or during some sexual assault on a child. . . . This is the kind of thing an outsider does." However, a police source says that an instructional videotape for a stun gun was found among the hundred and eighty tapes taken from the Ramsey home.



Manufacturers of stun guns were contacted after Lou Smit identified the marks, and forensic experts have confirmed that the distance between the two marks in each set conforms to the measurements between the prongs of an Air Taser, which is one of some fifty models of stun gun on the market. The use of a stun gun could be positively confirmed only if JonBenét's body were exhumed, and there have been suggestions that this should be done. In 1994, Michael Dobersen, the coroner of Arapahoe County, southeast of Denver, exhumed the body of Gerald Boggs, who had been buried for eight months, to test tissue for evidence of electric shock. A stun gun had been found in his wife's car. The test proved positive, and Boggs's wife and her boyfriend were eventually convicted of murder. If the Ramseys were to object to an exhumation of JonBenét's body, the police would have to get a court order to go through with it. "Every rock must be turned over, and if that means swabbing everyone's mouth or exhuming JonBenét's body that's what the police will have to do," Hunter says. "I don't want the public to think that everything already has been done when in effect everything hasn't been done."

All clues have to be looked at in conjunction with other evidence, however, and the police have rebuttals ready for the theory that the murder was committed by someone from outside the house. For instance, what kidnapper would forget to bring a ransom note and then use Patsy Ramsey's writing pad? The note is possibly the most solid piece of evidence in hand. The Colorado Bureau of Investigation eliminated the possibility that John Ramsey wrote the note, but Patsy hasn't been excluded. Curiously, the Christmas message that the Ramseys posted on their Web site contained a sentence that seemed to echo the ransom note in the use of the words "and hence" and in the rhythm of the phrasing. Hunter has called upon Robert Kupperman, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Donald Foster, a professor of literature at Vassar and a noted linguist, to study the ransom note. "If the linguistics experts say she wrote it," Hunter says, "we may have something." Add a handwriting expert who will say that Patsy wrote it and you have "soft evidence" that might be enough to charge her as an accessory. But who is the principal? "I would like there to be a smoking gun," Hunter says, "and I don't care who the gun is aimed at."

ALEX HUNTER has been the District Attorney of Boulder County for twenty-five years. He was opposed in an election only once. Yet the principal accusation against him now is that he is a prosecutor who can't prosecute. One of the chief examples of his inadequacy in this regard is the infamous Manning case. In the early nineteen-eighties, Elizabeth Manning and her boyfriend were accused of killing her three-year-old son. Hunter prosecuted the case, and Manning wound up with a one-year sentence. Her boyfriend got only ten years, for felony child abuse and assault. The problem was that the police, in order to get a confession, promised Manning that she would be treated as a witness, not as a suspect, if she coöperated with them. She led them to her son's corpse and gave a statement implicating herself and her boyfriend. But, since the police didn't treat her as a suspect, she was not given her Miranda warning. Hunter filed murder charges against her anyway, and, sure enough, the court threw out her statement. "The public wanted Hunter to go after both of them, and so he did," says Murray Richtel, who was the judge who presided over the early stages of the case, "even though the good lawyer in him knew that he didn't have a prayer legally of nailing them both." The lesson of the Manning case is not that Alex Hunter is a bad prosecutor but that he let himself be swayed by public sentiment into try-



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ing a case that was unwinnable. There are obvious parallels here with the Ramsey case, but not the ones that his critics seem to be making. Hunter is being very careful not to be pushed into anything this time.

The other frequent criticism of Hunter is that he is Mr. Plea Bargain. Although the prosecutor's office in Boulder is generally respected by judges, defense attorneys, and defendants alike, the police have seemed less enthusiastic for some time, particularly about Assistant District Attorney Peter Hofstrom, who heads the felony division, and who went head to head with Commander Eller in the Ramsey case. Hofstrom, whom Judge Richtel calls "Hunter's conscience," distinguishes among felony defendants and treats them differently even if they've all committed the same crime. Although a judge pronounces sentence, a plea bargain can pretty much determine what happens to a defendant. With Hofstrom, nonviolent first offenders usually get a two-year deferred sentence. The defendant is told, in effect, Stay out of trouble, make restitution, attend an appropriate program for two years, and the case will be dismissed and your records sealed. Jury trials are a relatively small part of Hofstrom's workload, which is one of the things that lead critics to accuse the D.A.'s office of excessive plea bargaining. But, with only two criminal judges available, Hunter asks, "how else do you dispose of two thousand felony cases a year?" And he adds, "Most cases that are plea-bargained still lead to jail time."

The Boulder D.A. does not have to deal with the kinds of problems that occur in large communities. Twenty-seven thousand acres of open space that the city purchased and declared off limits to development encircles and protects Boulder from becoming a big city with big-city problems. Housing prices are high, and there are no ghettos. There's little of the underclass desperation that produces street crime and career criminals. Bicycle theft is the typical crime.

Hunter shaped his office to reflect Boulder's unique circumstances. He was elected district attorney in 1972, the first time eighteen-year-olds voted. He advocated reclassifying marijuana possession as a misdemeanor, and squeaked into office by a margin of six hundred and eighty-eight votes out of some sixty-eight thousand. That same year, liberals who advocated slow growth and environmental protection won a number of local races and started to form the new establishment. The People's Republic of Boulder, some called it.

Like so many of the present generation of Boulder's civic leaders, Hunter had moved to town from somewhere else and never left. He grew up in Briarcliff Manor, New York, and came to Boulder when he was eighteen to attend the University of Colorado. After graduation, he stayed to study law. He made law review, and in the fall of 1963 he became a clerk for a justice of the Colorado Supreme Court. Eighteen months later, he was a deputy D.A. in Boulder. In 1967, with Bill Wise, his closest friend, he opened a private practice. He was more conservative than most of his Boulder contemporaries, but he was active in the Democratic Party and soon became the local Party's chairman. He had entertained notions of running for office at the state level, but during his first term as D.A. he had some severe financial reversals—bad real-estate deals—and he abandoned his ideas about a larger-scale political career. Besides, being a big fish in a small pond turned out to be more satisfying than he had anticipated.

Today, Hunter lives with his wife of fourteen years, Margie, a gynecologist at the University of Colorado student health center, and their two children, eleven-year-old Brittany, and eight-year-old John. He has three grown children from a previous marriage. The Hunters' ranch-style house sits on an acre of land, with a sunroom facing a footbridge over a small stream and a view of the Flat Irons and the Indian Peaks. Like most Boulderites, Hunter is a health enthusiast. He plays squash and recently passed the eighteen-thousand-mile mark on his Schwinn exercycle.

Rehabilitation is the foundation of Hunter's philosophy of law enforcement. "Hunter is interested in preventing people from getting into the criminal mix," Paul McCormick, an eminent criminal-defense attorney in Colorado, says. Hunter held hundreds of meetings with community members, and soon Boulder had a consumer-protection unit, a victim-assistance program, and a

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BIRDS & FLOWERS

My local, the Chelsea, where I took you for a pint
Has been demolished, which leaves us drinking in the rain,
Two inky smiles on handkerchiefs tied for luck like dolls
Flapping where the window should be, in Ireland or Japan.

A wagtail pauses among maple leaves turning from red
To pink in the picture you enclose with your good news.
"I have been a man of home these years," you write, "often
Surprised to know so much passion hidden in myself."

You who translated for me *ichigo-ichie* as "one life,
One meeting" as though each encounter were once-in-a-
Lifetime, have been spending time with your little children:
"But I will go back to the world of letters soon." Fuyuji,

The world of letters is a treacherous place. We are weak
And unstable. Let us float naked again in volcanic
Pools under the constellations and talk about babies.
The picture you sent to Belfast is called "Birds & Flowers."

—Michael Longley

crime-prevention education program. He supported the Boulder Health Department's controversial needle-exchange program for addicts, and when a drug bust netted the county nearly half a million dollars he agreed that the money should be used for counselling teenage mothers. The program won a Ford Foundation award.

"Hunter knows what the community wants out of a prosecutor," Bob Grant, the Adams County D.A., says. "Which is quite different from what most communities in this state want. I would have difficulty being a D.A. in Boulder. My personal philosophy involves taking hard stands—using the jails, using the prisons. I think retribution has its own rehabilitative component." Judge Richtel, who differs with Hunter on many issues but is convinced that his policies reflect sincere beliefs, points out that "it's easy for a community with liberal principles to worry about rehabilitation." But "then you get a terrible crime and your values are challenged. That is why there is so much criticism of Hunter now."

THE Ramsey case is by any standard bizarre, and it is certainly unique as far as crimes in Colorado go. There are no models to follow in investigating a staged kidnapping in which the body is found at the putative abduction site. Chief Koby now says that there is a possibility that the Ramsey case will ultimately be shelved, but he would be in favor of convening a grand jury if an indictment was not forthcoming. In that case, John and Patsy Ramsey would almost certainly be called to testify, and the threshold for an indictment is simply probable cause—considerably easier to demonstrate than proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

Hunter worries that he could confront a runaway grand jury. A prejudiced panel might recommend an indictment of one or both parents, whatever the evidence, and Hunter could then be faced with the dilemma of having either to refuse to sign the indictment or to try a weak case. If the grand jury failed to indict, however, it may, under Colorado law, issue a report that can be made public and might serve Hunter's interests. With the case still technically open, Hunter could always bring charges later if new evidence emerged. In the meantime, a grand-jury report might satisfy the community's understandable wish for information.

Some people think that because of the way Alex Hunter has chosen to run the D.A.'s office it just doesn't have what it takes for a no-holds-barred court battle. There's not enough of the day-in, day-out courtroom experience that turns young attorneys into seasoned trial lawyers. Judge Richtel points out that Hunter's office always faces difficulties in the courtroom. "They're so rehabilitation- and treatment-oriented on a conscious level that when a case ends up in court self-doubt creeps in on an unconscious level. It's not a trial-oriented system. The skills aren't there. That's not in any sense a criticism; it's just a fact."

If there is a trial, the prosecutors will have to deal with the Ramseys, even if someone else is charged with the crime. "They were eyewitnesses to significant aspects of the crime," Marianne Wesson, who teaches criminal law at the University of Colorado, says. "Failure to call them would allow the defense to put them on as hostile witnesses, cross-examine them, and later argue that the prosecutor has so little faith in their truthfulness that he doesn't dare sponsor their testimony." Bob Grant agrees. If someone other than the parents were to be charged, he says, "the prosecution is going to have to rehabilitate Patsy and John Ramsey. They're going to have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that they didn't do it." An attorney for any other defendant would almost certainly argue that one or both parents murdered their child. That is why, Grant says, "a lot of the work being done out of Alex's office is designed to either cement or tear down the theory that the Ramseys did it." If anyone is ever charged—no matter who it is—the Ramseys will be in court and will be the focus of the trial. ♦

"Sense and what?" "Whose opus?"

Those are the questions likely to greet Oscar-nominated films in Southwest Georgia, where some people might anticipate the opening of a film based on Jane Eyre's work—but most would feel the Academy of Arts and Sciences doesn't have its finger on the pulse of America.—*Albany* (*Ga.*) *Herald.*

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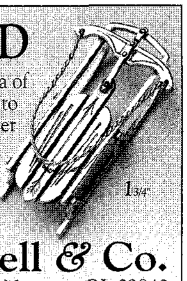

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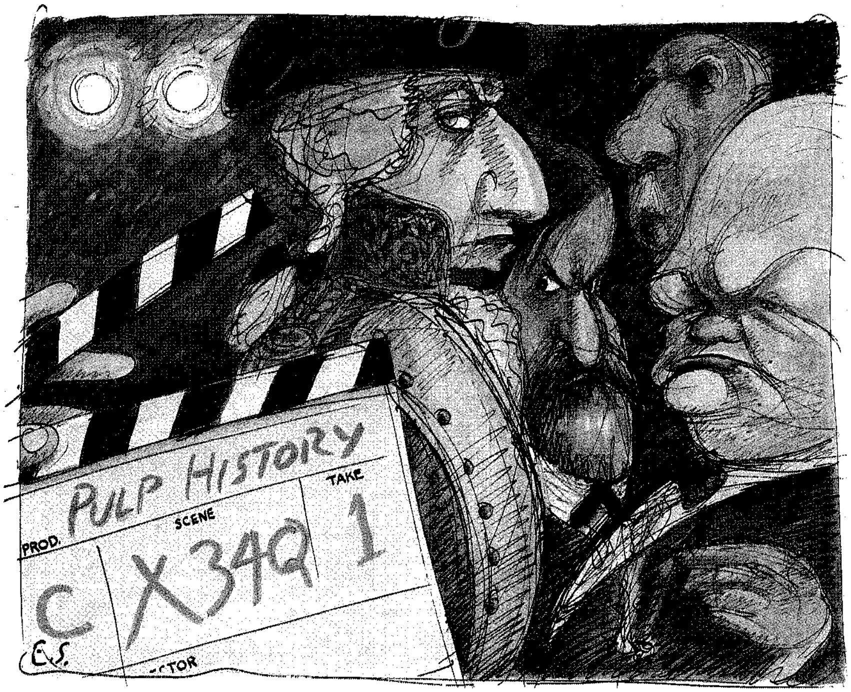
ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

CLIO AT THE MULTIPLEX

What Hollywood and Herodotus have in common.

BY SIMON SCHAMA

"WE have come to understand that who we are is who we were," says Anthony Hopkins, impersonating John Quincy Adams at the climactic moment of Steven Spielberg's "Amistad." He says this in front of a bust of his father, John Adams, seen in soft focus. A muted trumpet sounds over the rhetoric, vaguely invoking patriotic sacrifice. Hearts around the theatre swell like popcorn. In reality, Adams's address to the bench on behalf of the abducted Africans of the Amistad took eight hours, spread over two days. Spielberg works on a broad canvas, but not that broad. His movie boils the speech down to a five-minute appeal to the Founding Fathers, and, in particular, a cheerful assertion of the compatibility of liberty and equality enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. When Jefferson duly appears (in bust form), we are evidently *not* meant to think of the unrepentant Virginia slaveholder. In fact, since the closing speech does little else but make that ringing appeal to ancestor worship, we're asked to believe that it was enough to sway the Justices (the majority of them slaveholders) into upholding the decision of the Connecticut court, thereby freeing the captives.



The academy should take some of the blame for Hollywood's blunders, because it has largely abandoned the importance of storytelling.

EDWARD SOREL

As a clinching argument about the legality of treating the Africans as born slaves or born free, this makes no sense, not least because the case turned neither on the morality nor on the legality of slavery in America but on the slave *trade* on the high seas. The Amistad Africans had been abducted from a British protectorate and shipped to a Spanish colony in clear violation of a treaty between the two kingdoms which prohibited the traffic. John Quincy Adams did end his great address with an appeal to the past, but it was an appeal to the independence of the Supreme Court, and invoked John Marshall and his colleagues, men apparently with too little name recognition for Hollywood. As for his peroration, "I can only ejaculate a fervent petition to Heaven that every member of [the Court] may go to his final account with as little of earthly frailty to answer for as those illustrious dead," it, too, may not have the ring of the box office, but it was a masterpiece of psychological cunning. One of the most odiously adamant of the Southern Justices, Philip Barbour, died in his sleep between the beginning and the end of Adams's speech, thus presenting Adams with a perfect opportunity to remind the rest of the bench of an even Supremer Court waiting for them.

It's an opportunity that Spielberg passes up. Instead, he concocts the feel-good fantasy that J.Q.A.'s appeal to ancestry was borrowed from Cinque, the leader of the shipboard slave rising—that between the Mende wise man and the Massachusetts rationalist (the two never met) there existed the unspoken bond of warriors for freedom. Possibly the most important moment in the movie is also the most fabulously fictitious. Cinque, sitting in Adams's library (in those far-off days Presidential libraries were places where ex-Presidents actually read books), reassures his champion that they will not go into court alone. "No, no, we have right at our side," Adams says hurriedly. "*No*," Cinque gently admonishes the ex-President. "I meant my ancestors. . . . I will call into the past . . . and beg them to come. . . . And they must come, for at this moment, I am the whole reason they have existed at all." Adams stares back at Cinque, mutely grateful for the insight. His eyes water with deferential illumination. Spielberg holds the shot and holds the shot, flagging its Significance.

You can't altogether blame Steven Spielberg for the piety. As a relatively recent convert to ancestor worship himself, he seems to have realized that in late-second-millennium America he has his work cut out for him, and he has applied his brilliance as a storyteller to getting it done. But lining up a row of busts of the Founding Fathers as a way of cuing up patriotic nostalgia only brings the difficulty of history-in-America into sharper focus. After all, those same patriarchs were in the business of repudiating, not venerating, the past—of creating a nation that was conspicuously liberated from the weight of the past's authority. And at the same time that the film invokes the need to keep the memory of national history alive it has a lot of fun with America's invention of political modernity. Martin Van Buren, looking like an affable chipmunk in Nigel Hawthorne's enactment (the real Adams, dedicated to vigorous swims in the Potomac, called Van Buren "inordinately fat"), is gleefully depicted as the archetypal creature of the hustings, complete with baby-kissing and Nixonian full-arm salutes, a deliberate contrast with the flinty, philosophical J.Q.A. Yet Adams, after his own blighted Presidential tenure, showed himself to be a belated but adept convert to political populism, jumping into the muckiest popular campaign of his day—anti-Masonry.

So when Hollywood history claims that in ancestor veneration lies our redemption from the culture of the short shelf life, it only sort of means it. "Amistad" is just the most recent, and most impressive, example of filmed history as costume civics, chronicles of latter-day saints and martyrs, right in line with "Glory," "Malcolm X," and "Michael Collins." If movie history is to get produced as box-office with a conscience, it must serve one of two purposes: explain the Origins of Us or act as Augury of What Is to Come. But this kind of history, whether designed as the genealogy of identity politics or as prudential political-investment service, seldom escapes the contemporary world that it claims to transcend. Even in a production as painstakingly researched as "Amistad," entrapment within the contemporary is suggested by a multiplicity of careless details, not enough in themselves for any except the most pedantically correct historian to get steamed over but cumulatively betraying a tin ear for the obstinate otherness of the past. While both the nocturnal shipboard musical party that sails past the newly liberated Amistad and the velocipede that rides past the astonished Africans who thought themselves home carry a certificate of impeccable research, the film's writers hardly notice (any more, I guess, than the audience does) utterances inconceivable in 1839. "Sure you do," Pete Postlethwaite says when Cinque denies knowing anything much about African domestic slavery. "*Yesss!*" the defense team cheers when it wins its verdict in court. "Is there anything as pathetic as an ex-President?" jeers a member of Van Buren's entourage, meaning John Quincy Adams. In 1839, that would have been an expression of sympathy, not of derision.

But perhaps the writers did notice all these details and intend them to narrow the distance between the past and the present, making history more user-friendly. This would explain the relentless tide of tepidly inspirational chorales that washes over the action, much like the musical accompaniment to a Party Convention bio-documentary eulogizing the nominee: Sigh here. Weep here. Chuckle here. A-*men!* here. Hence, too, some of the casting, which recycles familiar faces in the roles to which previous Hollywood productions have assigned them. Meet Morgan Freeman once again as the noble but uneasy intermediary between white and black culture. Say hello to Matthew McConaughey as the cutely presumptuous lawyer, whose courtroom savvy is belied by his rumpled but winsome demeanor. (The real Roger Baldwin was a distinguished advocate, a Yale man, and the grandson of a signer of the Declaration of Independence.) Most peculiar of all, the urge for familiarity seems to involve the assumption that history, especially American history, calls for Brits in costume, Masterpiece thespians, thereby giving the unintended impression that the Revolution never actually happened.

Historians ought not to gripe too much about these anomalies. A recent and excellent anthology of their commentaries on historical movies, "Past Imperfect," edited by Mark Carnes, is a litany of complaint about distortion ("A Man for All Seasons"), naïve lack of interpretation ("Gandhi"), and the passing off of conspiracy theory as documented evidence ("JFK"). But if "historical consultant" has generally come to mean a low-rent data bank for producers in a hurry, rather than any real conceptual or creative role in the shaping of a credible historical narrative, the academy must take at least some of the blame, for having largely abandoned, until recently, the importance of storytelling as the elementary condition of historical explanation. Storytelling (aside from its exacting formal demands) lies at the heart of historical

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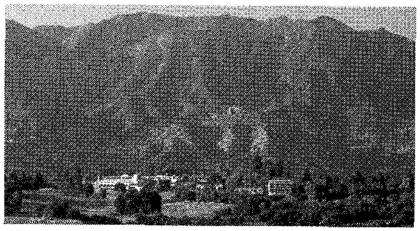

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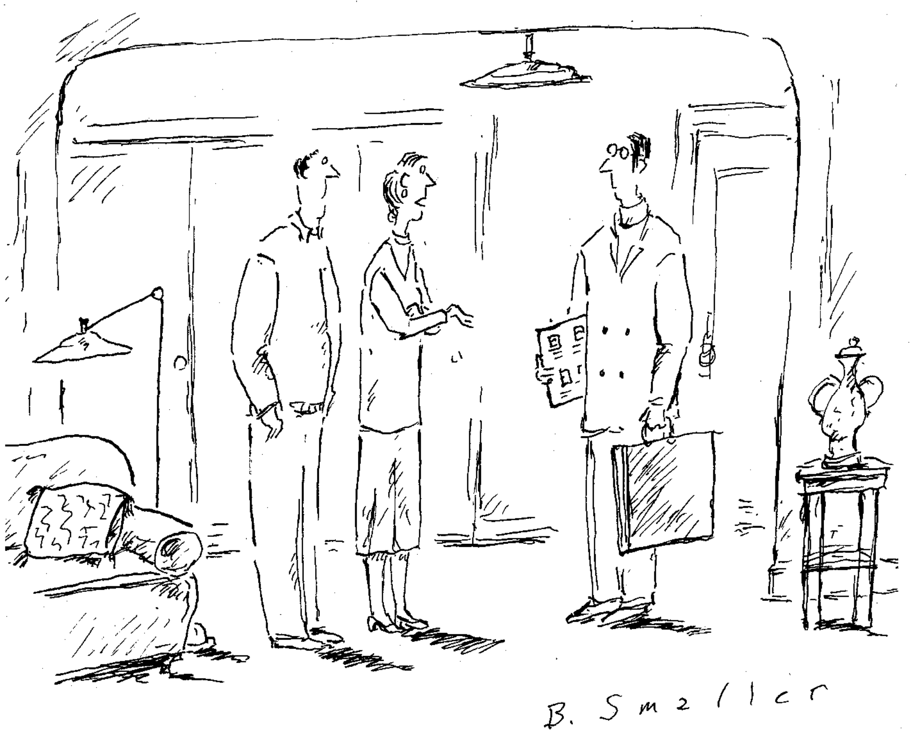


"We want it to look lived in, but not necessarily by us."

• •

teaching and ought to be as much a part of the training of young historians as the acquisition of analytical skills. When the historian Natalie Zemon Davis, for example, who is herself gifted at and sensitive to the subtleties of narrative, got involved in the making of Daniel Vigne's "The Return of Martin Guerre," that involvement was apparent in every frame, in the way the actors wore their village clothes—not clothes fresh from the wardrobe department or soiled for the day but evidently lived-in, frayed, and patched hand-me-downs. Vigne and Davis reconstructed the texture of rural provincial life in sixteenth-century France, its rites of passage and its rough justice as remote from modern experience as if the story had been African, rather than European. As a result, the crucial trial scene, at the end of the movie, was a long way from being Perry Mason in doublet and hose, yet lost nothing of its dramatic power for being historically credible.

A true feeling for period, then, should never be confused with pedantically correct costume-and-décor detail. It's possible to get all the minutiae right and still get the dramatic core of a history wrong. And here's a trade secret. The right stuff, whether the historian is trawling through the archives or prowling the set, is to have a hunch for the illuminating power of the incidental detail. At the climax of the true Amistad history, Spielberg missed, somehow, an astounding story that ought to have been a director's dream. Just as John Quincy Adams, a few days before he was to argue the case before the Supreme Court, alighted from his carriage in front of the Capitol (still, incidentally, *without* its dome), a violent burst of gunfire made his horses bolt. The first demonstration of the Colt repeating rifle was being performed in the Capitol yard. Adams's coachman was thrown to the ground, and the following day he died of his injuries. For the devoutly religious statesman, there could have been no more shocking witness that Providence was watching over the unfolding drama. Colts, carriage horses, and Calvinism—the kind of historical collision undreamed of in scriptwriters' fiction.

All history is a negotiation between familiarity and strangeness. No one put it better than Thomas Babington Macaulay when, in 1828, at the ripe old age of twenty-seven, in a famous book review (which the omnivorous John Quincy Adams is likely to have read in *The Edinburgh Review*), he presumed to define history as divided between reason and imagination: "a compound of poetry and philosophy." What Macaulay yearned for was a perfect marriage between those two contrasting modes of apprehending the past. But he was not optimistic about seeing that ambition realized, even in his own dazzling and exuberant prose. Instead, he viewed history as a relentlessly contested battleground between regiments of analysts and storytellers, with him stuck in a no man's land as the polemical bullets whistled over his head. In the meantime, he lamented, the best stories were being told to the biggest audiences by historical novelists, the auteurs of their day, and none of them more accomplished than Sir Walter Scott, the Spielberg of the Tweed Valley, whom most academic historians disdained but whom Macaulay deeply envied and admired. In a beautiful aside, Macaulay compared Scott to the apprentice of a medieval master of stained-glass windows working in Lincoln Cathedral. The spurned apprentice went about collecting the shards and fragments discarded as worthless by his master, and assembled them in a window of such blazing splendor that the master not only acknowledged the superior genius of his pupil but killed himself out of humbled mortification. Scott, Macaulay says, is the inspired opportunist who understands how to use the materials despised as trivially anecdotal by the philosophical historians. And, while Macaulay yielded to no Cambridge don in his insistence on the indispensability of reasoned interpretation, he saw the fate of history in popular culture as conditional on its self-appointed masters being prepared to reacquaint themselves with the imaginative skills of the storyteller.

Macaulay knew that both treatments of history—"map" and "painted landscape," as he characterized them—were hallowed by venerable pedigrees. He acknowledged Thucydides, for all his powerful narrative art, to be the founding father of history as the political science of the past, unapologetically engaged in explaining the great crisis of his age: the Peloponnesian War. Like Spielberg's writers, Thucydides had no hesitation in putting in the mouths of protagonists such as Pericles the sentiments he *thought* they would have uttered, even if there was no record of their speeches, or any recollection on his part of what had been said. Neither for Macaulay nor for Thucydides was there the slightest anxiety that the record of the past might be fatally distorted by the enthusiasms and preoccupations of the present, or that the primary mission of history was indeed to explain and recount the Origins of Us.

But Macaulay knew that there was another kind of history—a history that emphasized, poetically, the otherness of the past, its obstinate unfamiliarity, the integrity of its remoteness. Indeed, he knew that the great exemplar of this kind of history, with its naïve sense of wonder and its promiscuous muddling of myth and ritual, report and document, was Herodotus, the figure whom Thucydides acidly criticized as forfeiting credibility through an indiscriminate use of sources, and whom Macaulay, neatly standing the title of patriarch on its head, adroitly characterized as a "delightful child." Most historical writers, both inside and outside the academy, will, I think, own up to both styles—the rational and the poetic—and perhaps even acknowledge that the original attraction was as much romantic as analytical. For some of us, it's the byways, rather than the highways, that unexpectedly turn out to be the more profound routes of illumination. And those of us who are prepared to surrender to the informing detour cherish history, as the late Dame Veronica Wedgwood confessed, for its "delightful undermining of certainty."

If American culture is suspicious of candid confessions of uncertainty, Hollywood's historymakers, by and large, have wanted nothing to do with it. Who needs story lines that don't know where they're going, a cast of characters in which the nice and the nasty seem disconcertingly indistinguishable, and where the business at hand seems to have nothing to say to the issues of the day? Outside Hollywood, though, there have been powerful history movies, created in the poetic, not the instructional, mode. These are the films that have respected the strangeness of the past, and have accepted that the historical illumination of the human condition is not necessarily going to be an edifying exercise—that memory is not always identical with consolation. These are also films that embrace history for its power to complicate, rather than clarify, and warn the time traveller that he is entering a place where he may well lose the thread rather than get the gist. Worse yet, the décor of the poetic history movies, while rich in authenticity, is often bleak and raw in aspect, resistant to the glossy patina of its antique furniture.

The best movies in this mode—Luchino Visconti's "The Leopard" (1963), Miklós Jancsó's "The Round-Up" (1965), Roberto Rossellini's "The Rise of Louis XIV" (1966), Andrei Tarkovsky's "Andrei Rublev" (1966), Werner Herzog's "Aguirre: The Wrath of God" (1972), and Yves Angelo's 1994 "Le Colonel Chabert"—not only are dedicated to reconstructing vanished worlds, in all their unruly completeness, but challenge the truisms of linear history, where the order of events is progressive in both a temporal and a moral sense. In curmudgeonly fashion, they hint that later is not necessarily better. Equally, though, such films accept the unavoidability of the past, the thinness of the soil in which our forebears lie buried. They don't so much reach out and grab the past in the name of the present as perform miracles in the opposite direction: have the present waylaid by the past. Rossellini's film used amateur actors in its faithfully ritualized tableaux of court life at Versailles, so that the "performance" of Jean-Marie Patte as Louis XIV eating alone on his dais with the public watching was utterly remote from a star turn, something that seems unlikely when, any day now, Leonardo DiCaprio does the Sun King at your multiplex. It was the genius of Visconti to cast Burt Lancaster against type, as the fatalistic Sicilian aristocrat in "The Leopard," so that his previous screen personae simply disappeared without a trace into the world of nineteenth-century Risorgimento Italy. Those are the kinds of movie history that enjoy confounding expectations, roughing up the neatness of our contemporary self-satisfaction. And, as often as not, they have something to say about what is at the back of every historian's mind: the relationship between the living and the dead.

The most eloquent of recent films to have done all this is Yves Angelo's tour de force "Le Colonel Chabert," based on a novella by Balzac. Angelo was the cinematographer for another remarkably faithful historical reconstruction—"Tous les Matins du Monde," the story of the seventeenth-century bass violist and composer Marin Marais—and is blessed with perfect historical pitch. Like "The Return of Martin Guerre," "Le Colonel Chabert" concerns a figure who, having been presumed dead on the battlefield of Eylau, in 1807, returns a decade later and attempts to have his survival acknowledged in law and in society. Unlike the sixteenth-century peasant, though, Chabert (played, again, by Gérard Depardieu, who must have worn the clothes of every generation after the Black Death) is repudiated by his wife. She has survived the debacle of the Napoleonic Empire and has made her peace with the Restoration by marrying an ambitious aristocrat with a squandered fortune but an ancient pedigree. She wants nothing to do with the tattered phantom of her past, a social embarrassment and a political peril.

No one knows a *historical* establishing shot like Yves Angelo. The first frames of "Le Colonel Chabert" transport the viewer directly and shockingly into a vanished world (while also announcing the story's theme: the battle between entombment and endurance), and they do so by annihilating a cliché of cinema history: the gorgeousness of Napoleonic military spectacle. Grimy fingers, seen in closeup, scrabble through uniforms encrusted with mud and blood, ripping the frogging, hunting the valuables. It is Eylau, the day after. A piano plays an adagio from a chamber piece. Mutilated horses are thrown on bonfires. Boots, sabres, helmets, and cuirasses pile up in tarnished hecatombs. The camera knowingly quotes from the period's own representations of disaster—the Napoleonic hagiography of Baron Gros, Géricault's severed limbs and heads, Goya's puddles of blood and sightless eyes—but without any preciousness or pedantry. Eventually, the camera tracks back to a panorama of death, almost casually observed, peasants busily scavenging the corpses amid the dirty snow, surviving officers dragging bodies to communal burial pits.

In the greatest ten minutes of Depardieu's career, Chabert tells his story to the lawyer he wants to recruit to his cause. Left for dead, he was buried in a mass grave. His mind flickers back and forth between the Napoleonic glory days and the squalid nightmare of their eclipse, and he speaks of the horror of being taken for mad, of incarceration in German asylums. Angelo has no need to picture these on camera, but he must provide convincing reconstructions of two historical milieus: the world Chabert has left, and the world in which he now finds himself marooned—that of Restoration France, in which the first condition of legitimacy is selective forgetfulness. That world, pitilessly cynical, and governed by an ex-émigré culture that is grossly venal and preposterously snobbish, is sketched with a fidelity both to Balzac and to historical truth. Mme. Chabert, now a countess, adjusts an earring of gray jasper decorated with a Greek-revival figure, revealing a taste more of the Empire than of the Restoration. The destitute children of Army officers killed on the battlefield are taught sabre slashes with wooden sticks by an unrepentant and impoverished Bonapartist who befriends Chabert. An entire world is conjured up on the narrow fault line between victory and calamity, between recall and oblivion. There are no heroes, no tear-pricking diapasons of grandiose music. When Napoleonic military brass sounds, its metallic bravura has the jangling noise of history's black jokes.

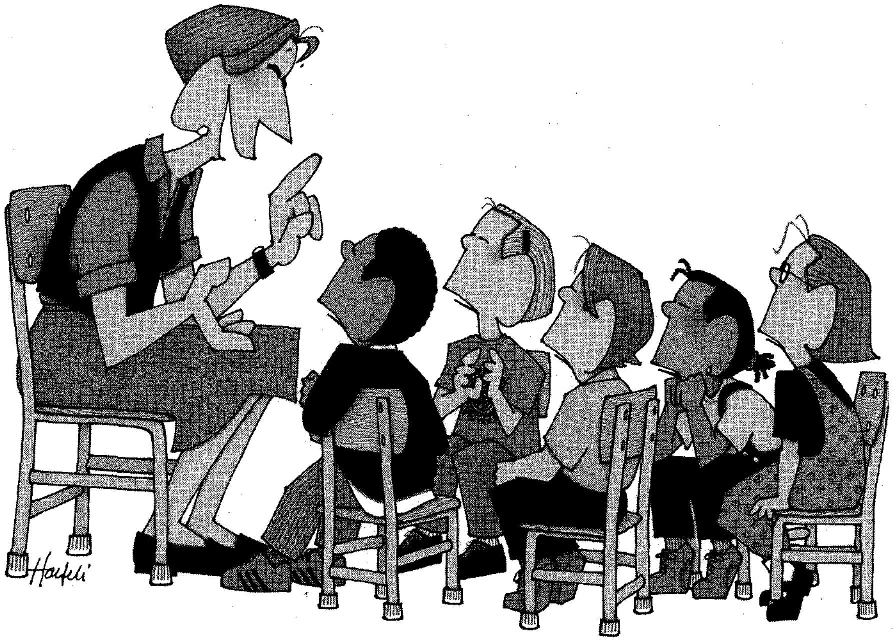
Is it possible for an American moviemaker to produce anything remotely like "Le Colonel Chabert"? Is anyone at DreamWorks up for, say, "The War of 1812," where British and American governments compete in a meaningless carnival of folly and hubris while the White House burns and men's lives are sacrificed for no reason at all?

The question of what befalls a history movie that nonetheless hews more to the poetic than to the instructional mode of historical narration is raised by the case of "Kundun," Martin Scorsese's undersung masterpiece. "Kundun" may have begun its life being as much of a good-cause movie as "Amistad." Its central figure, after all, is the unquestionably heroic, Nobelized figure of the Dalai Lama. And even though we're unlikely to see Michael Eisner in saffron any time soon, the atmosphere of Buddhist worthiness circulating in Hollywood can hardly have hurt its chances of being taken on by Disney.

But what Scorsese has accomplished is a work that has absolutely nothing to do with its ostensible billing as "epic." Like all great movies made in the poetic mode, it approaches its subject indirectly, backing into history rather than declaiming the theme. Its real story is about the abrupt *arrival* of history, both in the life of a small child and in the life of the culture he is supposed to personify. These linked narratives turn on the loss of innocence and the loss of freedom, not themes calculated to ingratiate themselves with the American moviegoer.

Like Angelo, Scorsese has invented a disconcerting visual language that flows naturally from his subject and does the necessary work of shaking the audience loose from habitual expectations of what a history movie is. The film is painted in the brilliant colors of the sand mandala, an ideogram of Buddhist contemplation, with Nirvana at its center. The reconstitution and dissolution of the mandala, part of the Buddhist belief in the chain of existence, at the movie's poignant end becomes a metaphor for the fate of traditional Tibet itself. There is a dreamlike, ritualized quality to Roger Deakin's cinematography, and the non-actors who speak Melissa Mathison's deceptively simple lines do so with an integrity that takes the film out of the realm of produced enactment and into that of orally transmitted chronicle—the beginning of history itself. "Tell me," the two-year-old future Kundun says, insisting on hearing yet again the story of his birth, and Scorsese, as much as the child's family, obliges.

Like Angelo, Scorsese can't resist quoting history, but in his case it's the history he lives in: the archive of the cinema. There are elements of Satyajit Ray in the infant's-eye view of the world at the beginning; clattering footage from a Méliès fantasy to punctuate the growing up; the brutal Agincourt scene from Olivier's "Henry V" playing as the walls of history press in on the young man; a tragic variation on the Atlanta crane shot from "Gone with the Wind" as the Dalai Lama dreams of slaughtered monks. While Tibet is pulled inexorably, as a captive, into the modern world of war and propaganda, the camera angle adjusts to modern necessities but still halts on the far side of movie conventions. The sympathetically embarrassed Chinese general attempts to converse with the Dalai Lama but is met with impassive silence. The debris of the modern world now gets mixed



"There are exceptions. Sometimes it's possible to have buzz without any hype whatsoever."

with the wreckage of tradition. Newspapers are read, but a living oracle, shrieking and hissing in prophetic convulsions, indicates the route of escape.

Throughout the movie, there are shots of startlingly compressed eloquence: a child Dalai Lama is literally framed against a high window of the Potala palace, simultaneously eminence and prisoner; a rat lapping at the water during a ceremony is allowed under Buddhist principles to continue his business undisturbed while the priests go about theirs; the Dalai Lama in his robes, summoned from a Peking bathroom to an audience with Chairman Mao, wipes his spectacles (inherited from the previous incarnation) before patiently attending to the wisdoms of the Great Helmsman, delivered from a well-upholstered couch. These are the pictures from which history is constructed, with the kind of intuitive delicacy that only a natural narrator understands.

THE most enduring historians have always valued the necessary alliance between picture-making and argument. Sometimes they have relied on actual illustrations, like the unknown maker of the Bayeux Tapestry, and the propaganda genius who in 1803, eight hundred years later, decided to exhibit the tapestry as part of Napoleon's attempt to represent himself as the latter coming of William the Conqueror in the planned invasion of perfidious Albion. As often as not, though, historians have been content to shoot their scenes and paint their pictures in their writing. These were the histories that imprinted themselves on my mind when I began to get the history bug. Sometimes such auteurs worked in improbable places. The Venerable Bede, in his monastery at Jarrow, tells the seventh-century story of the West Saxon assassin sent to kill the virtuous King Edwin of Northumbria. To make sure the contract is done right, the hit man paints his double-edged dagger with poison. But at the last instant, faster than you can say "Secret Service," a loyal thane throws himself in the way of the killer. The dagger passes right through the body of the retainer and pierces the King, who nonetheless survives to become a Christian convert.

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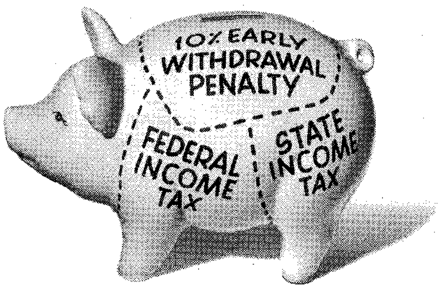

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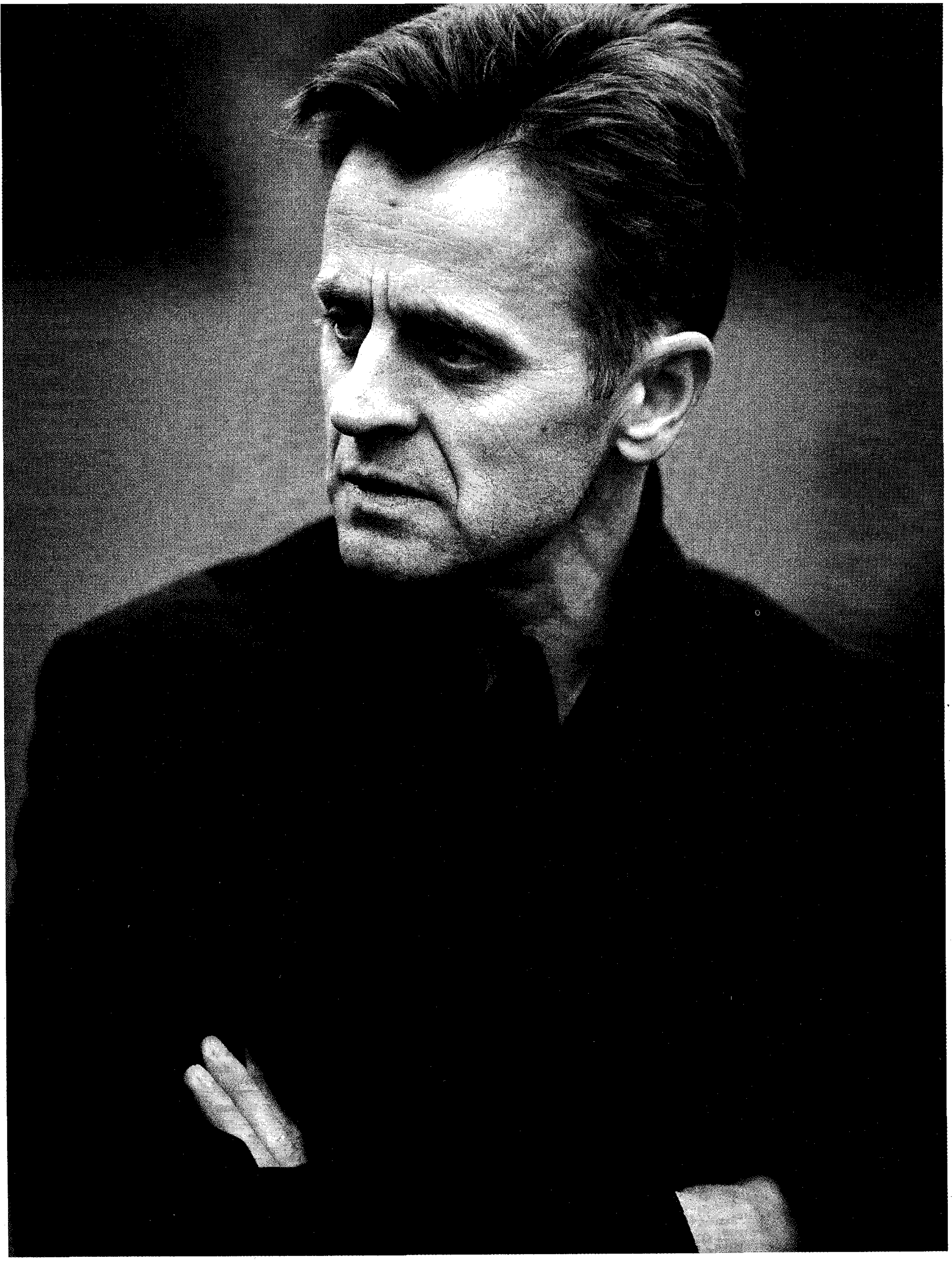


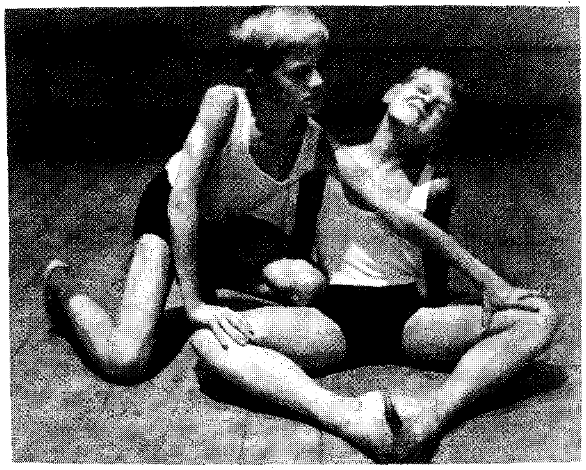
Baryshnikov's "exile," his reputed melancholy, and his high-profile romances helped make him a mass-media ballet star. Photograph by Max Vadukul. Opposite: Baryshnikov (at right) during a playful moment with classmate Alexander Godunov in Riga.

PROFILE

THE SOLOIST

At fifty, Mikhail Baryshnikov reflects on how ballet saved him.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA



COURTESY OF JURIS KAPRAIS

IT is raining, and Mikhail Baryshnikov is standing in a courtyard in Riga, the capital of Latvia, pointing up at two corner windows of an old stucco building that was probably yellow once. With him are his companion, Lisa Rinehart, a former dancer with American Ballet Theatre, and two of his children—Peter, eight, and Aleksandra, or Shura, sixteen. He is showing them the house where he grew up. "It's Soviet communal apartment," he says to the children. "In one apartment, five families. Mother and Father have room at corner. See? Big window. Mother and Father sleep there, we eat there, table there. Then other little room, mostly just two beds, for half brother, Vladimir, and me. In other rooms, other people. For fifteen, sixteen people, one kitchen, one toilet, one bathroom, room with bathtub. But no hot water for bath. On Tuesday and Saturday, Vladimir and I go with Father to public bath."

I open the front door of the building and peer into the dark hallway. "Let's go up," I suggest. "No," he says. "I can't." It is more than a quarter century since he was here last.

AFTER his defection to the West, in 1974, Baryshnikov said again and again that he had no wish to return to the Soviet Union, or even to the former Soviet Union. Then, late last year, he accepted an invitation to dance at the Latvian National Opera, the stage on which he first set foot as a ballet dancer. Why he changed his mind is something of a mystery. Perhaps he just felt that it was time. (He will turn fifty next week.) Perhaps he wanted to show his children what he came from. To me all he said was "I am going to visit my mother's grave."

Baryshnikov, actually, is not a man for sentimental journeys. He is too resistant to falseness. Nor does he like being followed around by journalists. Interviews are torture to him: "You ask me what's happened in my life, why and how I did this and that. And I think and tell, but it's never true story, because everything is so much more complicated, and also I can't even remember how things happened. Whole process is boring. Also false, but mostly boring." He politely does not point out the journalist's role in this: how the questions are pitched, and the answers interpreted, according to already established ideas about the life in question—in this case, the life of a man who escaped from the Soviet Union at the age of twenty-six. It is hard to find an article on Baryshnikov that does not describe a look of melancholy in his eyes, supposedly the consequence of exile from his Russian homeland. This is the dominant theme of writings about him, but in his view it has nothing to do with him. He has lived in the United States for almost half his life. He is a United States citizen and regards this country as his home. He has lived with an American, Rinehart, for about ten years, and they have three children who speak no Russian.

Of course, when his return to Latvia was announced, the exile theme sounded with new force. The press in Riga was sown with sentimental formulas: the prodigal-son motif, the return-home motif, the ancestral-roots motif. He refused them all. For Russia, he says, he feels no nostalgia. Though his parents were Russian, he did not move to Russia until he was sixteen: "I was guest there, always." As for Latvia, it was his birthplace, but his parents were "occupiers" (his word) there. "The minute plane set down, the minute I stepped again on Latvian land, I realized this was never my home. My heart didn't even skip one beat."

WHAT has made Baryshnikov a paragon of late-twentieth-century dance is partly the purity of his ballet technique. In him the hidden meaning of ballet, and of classicism—that experience has order, that life can be understood—is clearer than in any other dancer on the stage today. Another part of his preëminence derives, of course, from his virtuosity, the lengths to which he was able to take ballet—the split leaps, the cyclonic pirouettes—without sacrificing purity. But what has made him an artist, and a popular artist, is the completeness of his performances: the level of concentration, the fullness of ambition, the sheer amount of detail, with the cast of the shoulder, the angle of the jaw, even the splay of the fingers, all deployed in the service of a single, pressing act of imagination. In him there is simply more to see than in most other dancers. No matter what role he is playing (and he has played some thankless ones), he always honors it completely, working

WASH HANDS AFTER EVERY BUSINESS DEAL

every minute to make it a serious human story. In an interview prior to the Riga concerts, the Latvian theatre critic Normunds Naumanis asked him why he danced. He answered that he was not a religious person (quickly adding that his mother had been, and had had him secretly baptized) but that he thought he found onstage what people seek in religion: "some approximation to exaltation, inner purification, self-discovery." He may hate interviews, but once he is in one he tends to pour his heart out. (This may be why he hates them.)

Though Baryshnikov directs a company, the White Oak Dance Project, he went to Riga in October alone, as a solo dancer, and next week (January 21st-25th), at the City Center, in New York, he will again perform by himself—his first solo concerts, ever, in the United States. There is something fitting in this. The things he now seeks in dance—the exaltation, the self-discovery—are easier to find if one is not lifting another dancer at the same time. Furthermore, audiences these days don't want their view of him blocked by other people. But, basically, solo is his natural state, the condition that made him. The rootlessness of his childhood sent him into himself—made him a reader, a thinker, a mind—and the rule of force he worked under in the Soviet Union had the same effect: it made him cherish what could not be forced, his own thoughts. This became a way of dancing. It is not that when he is performing he is telling us who he is. Rather, he is telling us, as fully as he can, what truth he has found in the role, what he has thought about it. In many of his solos today, he seems to be giving us a portrait of thought itself—its bursts and hesitations, the neural firings—and this is something one must do solo.

It was as a presenter of new work, not just as a dancer, that Baryshnikov returned to Riga. Most of the solos he brought were from his White Oak repertory—works by people like Mark Morris, Twyla Tharp, and Dana Reitz. These pieces were far removed from the earnest Soviet ballets that the Latvians had last seen him in and that some of them would probably have liked to see him in again. (The Reitz piece, "Unspoken Territory," has him, in a sarong, stalking around the stage in silence—no music—for twenty minutes.) In his mind, he was going to Riga not as he was then but as he is today. To the Riga press, however, it was what he was then—the man who had been one of them and had left—that was important. Also, as usual in the Soviet Union, former or otherwise, politics came to greet him. There is considerable tension between Riga's Latvian and Russian populations. (Though Russians outnumber Latvians in the capital, Latvian independence has made the Russians the underdogs now: Russians must pass a Latvian-language test to get a job in the government.) The Russians wanted to know why Baryshnikov had come to Latvia, not to Russia, and why, if he gave only three interviews concerning his visit (he wanted no press, no questions), he gave them to Latvian, not to Russian, journalists.

To such problems Baryshnikov applied his usual remedy: work. The happiest I ever saw him in Riga was in a studio in his old school, rehearsing works for the upcoming program. Perched on a folding chair, watching him, was the director of the school, Haralds Ritenbergs, who had been the leading danseur noble of the Latvian state ballet company when Baryshnikov was a child. ("To us he was like Rock Hudson," Baryshnikov says.) Next to Ritenbergs sat Juris Kapralis, a handsome, bighearted Latvian whom Baryshnikov had as his ballet teacher from age twelve to sixteen. What must these men have felt? Here was the dear, small, hardworking boy they had known, now almost fifty years old and the most famous dancer in the world, rehearsing before them steps such as they had never seen. There should have been some shock, some acknowledgment of the break in history—of all the years when so many things had happened to him, and to them, to make their lives so different. But there was none of that. What I saw was just three old pros working together. Baryshnikov would perform the steps. Then he and the two older men would huddle together and, in the hand language that dancers use, discuss the choreography. Yes, Baryshnikov said, this piece, no music. Yes, here I do arms this way, and he demonstrated a stiff, right-angled arm, the opposite of what ballet dancers are taught. I looked for raised eyebrows. There were none. The older men nodded, watched, asked questions. To them, it seemed, he was still their hardworking boy, and his business was their business, dancing. Baryshnikov showed them his shoes—jazz shoes, Western shoes—and Ritenbergs and Kapralis unlaced them, peered into them, poked the instep, flexed the sole. They were like two veteran wine makers inspecting a new kind of cork. Whatever feelings passed among the three men, they were all subsumed into work. Now, as had not happened when Baryshnikov showed me his old house or the hospital where he was born, time vanished. He had returned home at last, but the home wasn't Riga; it was ballet.

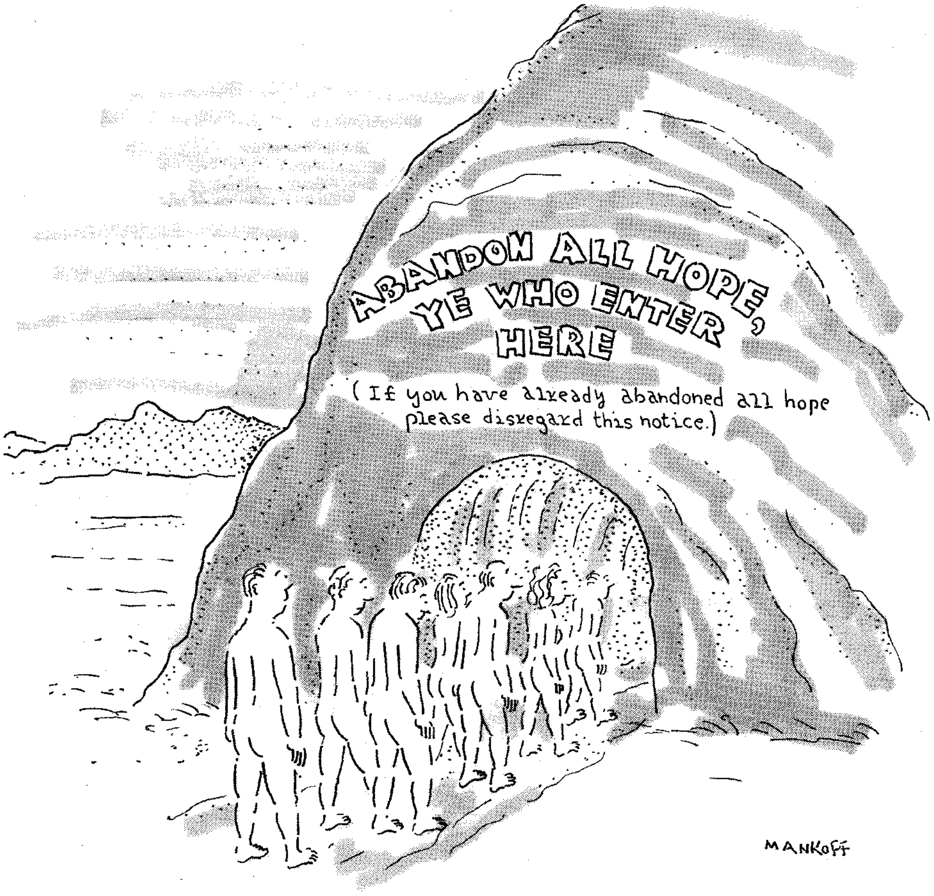
MIKHAIL NIKOLAIEVICH BARYSHNIKOV was born in Riga eight years after Latvia, in the midst of the Second World War, was forcibly annexed to the Soviet Union. Once the war was over, Russian workers streamed into this tiny Baltic country, the size of Vermont. Among them was Baryshnikov's father, Nikolai, a high-ranking military officer who was sent to Riga to teach military topography in the Air Force academy. With him came his new wife, Aleksandra, who had lost her first husband in the war, and Vladimir, her son by that first marriage. By Nikolai, she had Mikhail, eight years younger than Vladimir, in 1948. The parents' marriage was not happy. The father seems to have been a curt, cold man. The mother, Aleksandra, was another matter, Baryshnikov says—"softer, interesting." She had had very little education but was a passionate theatregoer. She went to drama, opera, and ballet, and she took Misha with her.

Misha was one of those children who cannot sit still. Erika Vitina, a friend of the family, says that when he ate at their house you could see his legs dancing around under the glass-topped dinner table. He himself remembers movement as an outlet for emotion. "One time I recall is when my mother first took me to visit my grandmother, on the Volga River," he told me. "Volga, it's a long way up from Latvia. We took a train through Moscow, and Moscow to Gorky, plus then you drive another seventy miles. We took taxi, or some car delivered us. It was very early morning when we arrived—little village, and very simple house, and there was my grandmother. And I was in such anticipation, because I was like five or so, maybe six. My mother said to me, 'Mikhail, hug your grandmother.' But I was so overwhelmed that I couldn't run to her and hug her. So I just start to jump and jump, jump like crazy, around and around. It was embarrassing, but same time totally what I needed to do. Mother and Grandmother stood and looked until it was over."

When he was about nine, his mother became friends with a woman who had danced with the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow and who now gave ballet lessons in Riga. "Mother was very excited by this friendship," Baryshnikov says. She enrolled him in her friend's class. When he was eleven, he moved over to the Riga School of Choreography, the state ballet academy. (One of his classmates there was Alexander Godunov, who would also defect, and dance at American Ballet Theatre under Baryshnikov's directorship.) Soon he showed extraordinary talent. Erika Vitina stresses the mother's involvement in Misha's ballet studies: "The father had no interest whatsoever in the ballet school. The mother brought him to the ballet school, put him there. All this happened physically, hand to hand."

"I was mama's boy in a way," Baryshnikov says. He remembers how beautiful she was. (In fact, in the one photograph I have seen of her she looks uncannily like him. It could be Baryshnikov with a wig on.) "My mother was a country girl from the Volga River," he said in a 1986 interview with Roman Polanski. "She spoke with a strong Volga accent. Very beautiful, very Russian—a one-hundred-per-cent pure Russian bride. But to tell the whole story of my mother, it's a long story." The end of the story is that during the summer when he was twelve she took him to the Volga to stay with her mother and then went back to Riga and hanged herself in the bathroom of the communal apartment. Vladimir found her. Baryshnikov never knew why she did it. "Father did not want to talk about it," he told me. Soon afterward, Vladimir left for the Army, and the father told Misha that now they would live together, just the two of them. The following year, Nikolai went away on a business trip and returned with a new wife, a new life. "I understood that I am not wanted," Baryshnikov said.

He looked for other families. He spent most summers with the family of


ABANDON ALL HOPE, YE WHO ENTER HERE
(If you have already abandoned all hope please disregard this notice.)
MANKOFF

Erika Vitina, and he stayed with them at other times as well. “Quite often,” Vitina says, “he would ring our doorbell late at night, saying that he had run away. But a week later I would receive a call from the ballet school”—she, too, had a child enrolled there—“and would be told that unless I sent Misha home they would have to call the police. We spent two years in this manner. From time to time, he'd come to stay with me, and then his father would take him away again.” Insofar as Baryshnikov has lived a life of exile, it had begun.

Erika Vitina recalls that his nights were often hard. Because he worried that he was too short to be a ballet dancer, he slept on a wooden plank—he had been told that this would help him grow faster (less traction)—and the blankets wouldn't stay tucked in. Before going to bed herself, Vitina would look in and cover him up again. Often, he would be calling out in his sleep, caught in a nightmare. But during the day, she says, he was “a happy, sunny boy.” Now, looking back on those years, Baryshnikov is quick to dispel any atmosphere of pathos: “Children being left, it's not always like books of Charles Dickens. When you lose your parents in childhood, it's a fact of life, and, you know, human beings are extraordinary powerful survivors. My mother commit suicide. I was lucky it was not in front of me, O.K.? Which is truth, and Father was confused, and we never had any relationship, serious relationship. I never knew my father, in a way. But what? It's made me different? No. I mean, I blame for every fuckups in my life my parents? No.”

“I got lucky,” he adds. “I fell in love with dance.” Every ounce of energy he had was now channelled into ballet. According to Juris Kapralis, who became his ballet teacher two months after his mother's death, he was a child workaholic: “Very serious boy. Perfectionist. Even in free time, go in corner and practice over and over again. Other boys playing, Misha studying. And not just steps, but artistic, as actor. He is thinking all the time what this role must be. I remember, once, ‘Nutcracker.’ He was thirteen, perhaps. I was prince, and he was toy soldier. After Mouse King dies, Misha relax his body. No longer stiff, like wooden soldier. Soft. Our ballet director ask him, ‘Who say you should do this?’ And he answer, ‘When Mouse King dies, toys become human. Toys become boys. Movements must change.’ He devise that himself. Small boy, but thinking.”

WHAT OUR DEAD DO

Jan came this morning
—I dreamt of my father
he says

he was riding in an oak coffin
I walked next to the hearse
and Father turned to me:

you dressed me nicely
and the funeral is very beautiful
at this time of year so many flowers
it must have cost a lot

don't worry about it, Father
—I say—let people see
we loved you
that we spared nothing

six men in black livery
walk nicely at our sides

Father thought for a while
and said—the key to the desk
is in the silver inkwell
there is still some money
in the second drawer on the left

with this money—I say—
we will buy you a gravestone
a large one of black marble

it isn't necessary—says Father—
better give it to the poor

I asked Baryshnikov recently whether, after his mother's death, ballet might have been a way for him to return to her. He paused for a long time and then said, “In Russia, dancing is part of happiness in groups. Groups at parties, people dancing in circle, and they push child to center, to dance. Child soon works up little routine. Can do a little this”—hand at the back of the neck—“a little this”—arms joined horizontally across the chest—“and soon make up some special steps, and learn to save them for end, to make big finale. This way, child gets attention from adults.”

In the case of a child artist, and particularly one who has suffered a terrible loss, it is tempting to read artistic decisions as psychological decisions, because we assume that a child cannot really be an artist. But, as many people have said, children are probably more artistic than adults, bolder in imagination, more unashamedly fascinated with shape, line, detail. In Baryshnikov's case, the mother's devotion and then the loss of her can help to explain one thing: the *work* he put into ballet. For the rest—the physical gift, the fusion of steps with fantasy, the interest in making something true and complete (“Toys become boys”), all of which are as much a part of him today as they were when he was twelve—we must look to him alone.

IN 1964, the Latvian state ballet went on tour to Leningrad with a ballet in which Baryshnikov, now sixteen, had a small role, and a member of the company took him to Alexander Pushkin, a

six men in black livery
walk nicely at our sides
they carry burning lanterns

again he seemed to be thinking
—take care of the flowers in the garden
cover them for the winter
I don't want them to be wasted

you are the oldest—he says—
from a little felt bag behind the painting
take out the cufflinks with real pearls
let them bring you luck
my mother gave them to me
when I finished high school
then he didn't say anything
he must have entered a deeper sleep

this is how our dead
look after us
they warn us through dreams
bring back lost money
hunt for jobs
whisper the numbers of lottery tickets
or when they can't do this
knock with their fingers on the windows

and out of gratitude
we imagine immortality for them
snug as the burrow of a mouse

—ZBIGNIEW HERBERT

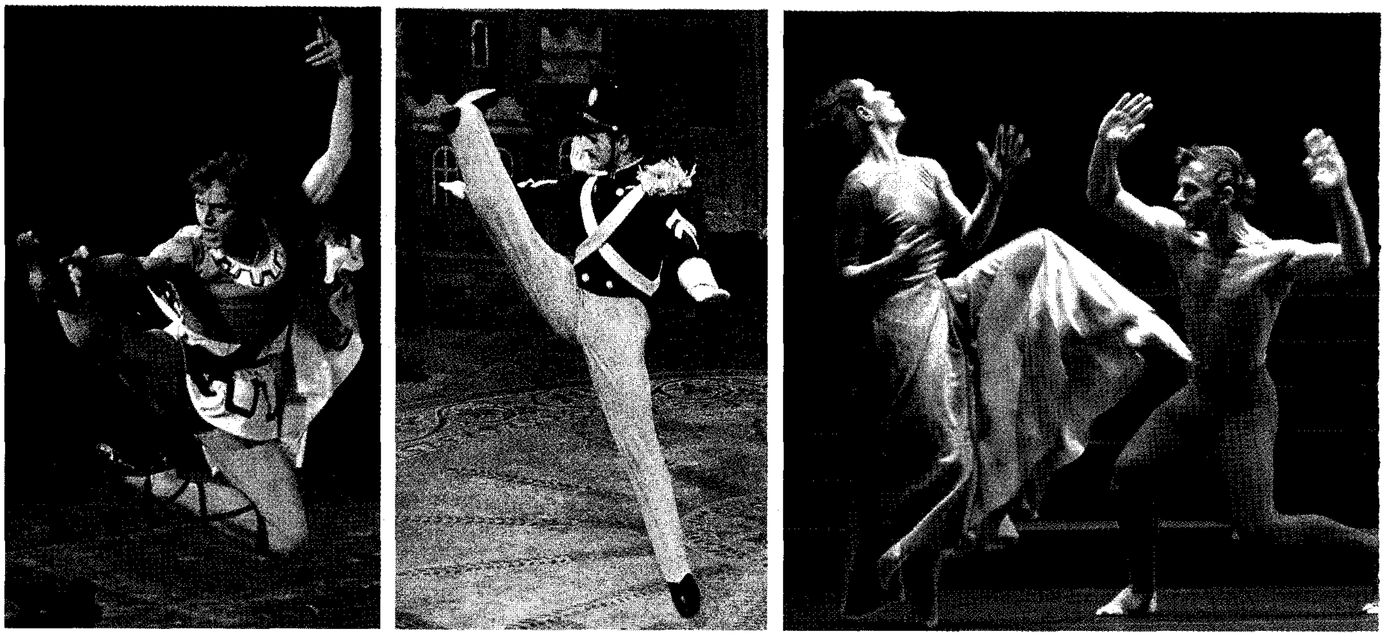
(*Translated, from the Polish, by John and Bogdana Carpenter.*)

revered teacher at the Kirov Ballet's school, the Vaganova Choreographic Institute. Pushkin immediately asked the director of the school to admit the boy. By September, Baryshnikov had moved to Leningrad and was installed at the barre in Pushkin's class. Thereafter, he rarely went back to Riga.

Next to his mother, Pushkin was probably the most important person in Baryshnikov's early life. Pushkin had begun his own ballet training in the studio of Nikolai Legat, who had helped train Nijinsky. Later, he studied with other famous teachers. When Baryshnikov joined his class, Pushkin was fifty-seven, and past dancing, but he had performed with the Kirov for almost thirty years, mostly in secondary roles. "Pas de deux, pas de trois," Baryshnikov says. "Sometimes substitute for a principal, but he was not principal type. Not very handsome—big nose, long legs, short body—and not very expressive. But classical, classical. Old-school, traditional, square. Academician. Usually, it's those kind of people, people who dance twenty-five years the same parts, who know more about technique than people who are advancing and trying out other sort of areas. Twenty-five years you come back after summer vacation and tune your body into same routine, you figure out timing, you figure out method."

Pushkin had begun teaching early, at the age of twenty-five, and he soon specialized in men. His classroom manner was famously laconic. He rarely offered corrections, and when he did they were of the most elementary sort. (It was said at the school that he had two: "Don't fall" and "Get up.") Rather, as Baryshnikov explains it, what made Pushkin so effective was the *logic* of the step combinations he taught—the fact that they were true not just to classical ballet but also to human musculature. They seemed right to the body, and so you did them right. And the more you did them the more you became a classical dancer. Another thing about Pushkin, his students say, is that he was a developer of individuality. He steered the students toward themselves, helped them find out what kinds of dancers they were. "Plus," Baryshnikov says, "he was extraordinary patient and extraordinary kind person. Really, really kind." If there is a point in classical art where aesthetics meet morals—where beauty, by appearing plain and natural, gives us hope that we, too, can be beautiful—Pushkin seems to have stood at that point, and held out a hand to his pupils. In any case, he was a specialist in calming down teen-age boys, getting them to work, and making them take themselves seriously. Out of his classroom in the fifties and sixties came the Kirov's finest male dancers—notably Nikita Dolgushin, Yuri Soloviev, and Rudolf Nureyev.

PUSHKIN took certain of his students very directly under his wing. The best-known example is Nureyev, who was ten years older than Baryshnikov. Nureyev had started studying ballet extremely late. "It was not until he was sixteen or seventeen that he came to Leningrad and put his leg in first position professionally," Baryshnikov says. "And he took this opportunity very—*errgghh*—like a tank. Very aggressive in terms of the education, in terms of the catch-up. And short temper. Sometimes in rehearsal, if he couldn't do certain steps he would just run out, crying, run home. Then, ten o'clock in the evening, he is back in studio working on the step till he will get it. People think he is oddball. And already his ambivalent sexuality was obvious, which in that conservative atmosphere was big problem. People were teasing him." So Pushkin and his wife, Xenia Jurgensen, another former Kirov dancer, took Nureyev into their home. He lived with them for a long time, not



Baryshnikov in the West: In Balanchine's "Prodigal Son" and "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," and in Graham's "American Document." In the Kirov's "Gis

just while he was in school but also during his early years at the Kirov. The fact that Nureyev defected in 1961—that he was accomplished enough and brave enough to go—was probably due in large measure to them, though it broke their hearts. (When Baryshnikov first went to their house, he saw Nureyev's electric train, installed as a kind of relic, in their living room.) Sacred vessel of the Russian tradition, Pushkin bred dancers so good, so serious and ambitious, that they could not survive in Russia. Yuri Soloviev killed himself. Nikita Dolgushin was banished to the provinces. Nureyev and Baryshnikov defected.

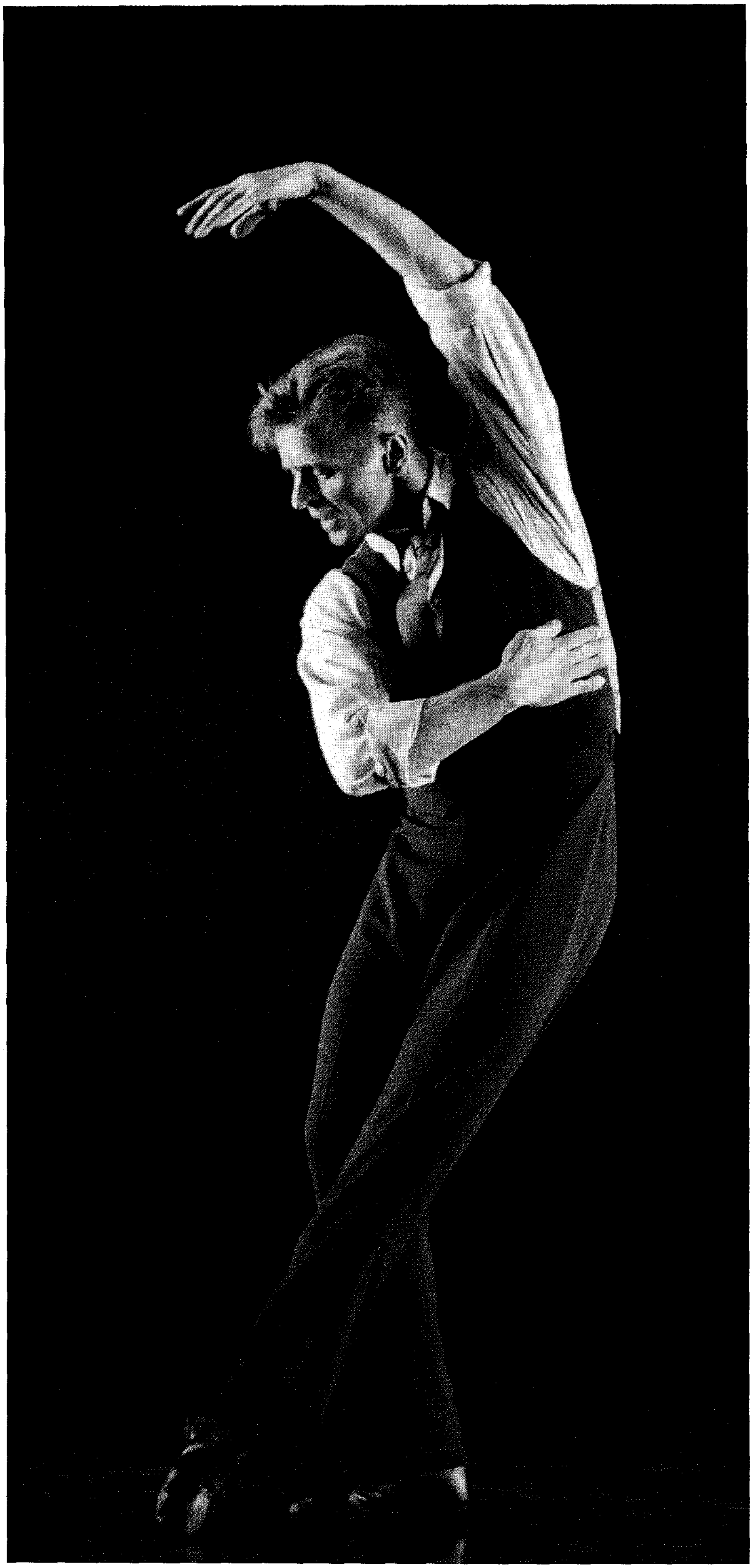
PUSHKIN and Jurgensen took Baryshnikov in as they had taken in Nureyev. "I spent weeks, sometimes months, staying with them," he says. He also ate at their house almost every night. Jurgensen was a good cook. "Very upper-class Russian food," Baryshnikov says. "Winter food—veal, cream." Then Pushkin and his pupil would work together, sometimes for hours, often on arms: "Find my way of moving arms, coördination. Young dancers don't think about this, only think about feet." Then, very often, it was too late for Baryshnikov to return to the dormitory, so he slept on the Pushkins' couch.

Baryshnikov was still very worried about his height. Russian ballet companies follow a strict system, called *emploi*, whereby dancers are sorted by type into certain kinds of roles and remain there for the rest of their careers. Baryshnikov, though he was still growing (he eventually reached five feet seven), seemed too short for the danseur-noble roles, the grave, poetic leading-man roles. Not just his height but also his stage presence—he was boyish, vivacious, a personality—seemed to be pushing him toward demi-caractère roles, the quick, often comic supporting-actor roles. As he put it in his interview with Polanski, "I thought I would end up as a Joker or a Harlequin somewhere," and this was not what he wanted. But Pushkin believed that his pupil would be a danseur noble, and he got him just to go on working. In 1967, Baryshnikov graduated from the Vaganova school. At his graduation performance, in the "Corsaire" pas de deux, "the scene was unimaginable," his biographer Gennady Smakov writes. The crowd howled; the chandeliers shook. Baryshnikov was taken into the Kirov Ballet as a soloist, skipping the normal starting position in the corps de ballet, and now his troubles really began.

"I joined the company when it was falling apart," Baryshnikov told Smakov. In the late sixties and the seventies, the Kirov went through a period of repression from which it has never fully recovered. In part, this was due to a society-wide tightening up after the Khrushchev "thaw." But in the ballet world there was redoubled anxiety, the result of Nureyev's defection. Konstantin Sergeyev, the director of the Kirov, turned the company into a mini police state. The repertory consisted either of nineteenth-century classics, restaged by Sergeyev, or of socialist flag-wavers. (Sergeyev himself, in 1963, made a ballet, "The Distant Planet," inspired by Yuri Gagarin's spaceflight.) Any newly commissioned ballets were vetted to make sure they threatened neither government policy nor Sergeyev's primacy as company choreographer. The dancers were watched vigilantly for signs of insubordination. If they looked like defection risks—indeed, if they failed to attend company meetings or had the wrong friends—they were often barred from foreign tours, which were their only means of supplementing their tiny incomes. Typically, the list of who would be going on a tour was not posted until the day of departure. Shortly beforehand, meetings would be held at which the dancers were encouraged to denounce their colleagues, so that their own names, rather than their colleagues', would be on the list. Many coöperated. Coöperate or not, the dancers were brought to their knees. Righteous suffering can ruin you almost as fast as shame. Other privileges at the Kirov—roles, choice of partners, time onstage—were also awarded less on the basis of merit than according to one's history of coöperation. The careers of what were reportedly superb artists, people who were one in a thou-

LEFT TO RIGHT: MARTHA SWOPE © TIME INC.; STEVEN CARAS; RICK MAIMAN/SYGMA; NINA ALOVERT; GARY FRIEDMAN

in Mark Morris's "Three Russian Preludes."



sand, and in whom ten years' training had been invested, were destroyed in this way.

Such were the circumstances in which Baryshnikov, nineteen years old and hungry to dance, found himself in 1967. He had to fight just to get onstage—at that time, even leading Kirov dancers performed only three to four times a month—and also to get the partners he wanted. Above all, he had to struggle over his casting. He was given danseur-noble roles eventually, but only eventually. (He waited six years to dance Albrecht in "Giselle," a part he desperately wanted.) Worse was the problem of getting a chance to perform in something other than the standard repertory. Baryshnikov wanted to dance new ballets, modern ballets, and some were being created at the Kirov, with excellent roles for him. But again and again such ballets were vetoed by the company's *artsoviet*, or artistic committee, and dropped after one or two performances. Baryshnikov was sent back to dancing "Don Quixote."

In 1970, midway into his seven-year career in Russia, things got a great deal worse, for in that year Natalia Makarova, the Kirov's rising young ballerina, defected while the company was performing in London. Baryshnikov was on this tour, and it was to him, not to Makarova, that the authorities devoted their special attention. As he sees it, they did not take Makarova seriously as a potential defector, because she was a woman: "They wouldn't think a woman would have guts to defect." Baryshnikov, on the other hand, sometimes had as many as three K.G.B. agents tailing him as he walked down the streets of London. He says that at that time he had no thoughts of defection. If he was closely confined at the Kirov, that was because he was greatly valued there. He was one of the company's leading dancers. "Also," he says, "the Kirov was a home to me, and I had unfinished business. I wanted to do *this* dance, with *these* people." Indeed, when he got the news about Makarova, who was a friend and also a former girlfriend of his, he was terribly worried for her: "I thought it will be difficult for her to survive in the West, that people will get advantage of her, that she will be sorry. Can you believe how stupid?"

But the events that led to his own defection were already accumulating. Four months before the London tour, Pushkin had died—of a heart attack, on a sidewalk—at the age of sixty-two. At that point, Baryshnikov later told an interviewer, "I realized that I was totally on my own." A second important development was the London tour itself. The audience and the critics went crazy over him. (If he thought it would be hard for a Soviet dancer to survive in the West, his London reviews may have given him reason to rethink that conclusion later.) But London gave him more than good reviews: "You cannot know what it meant to travel. Just to see how other people react to you, and to *measure* your ability as an artist, as a dancer. And to see what's supposed to be your *life*—that your life is not just in cocoon, that other people in other countries do have same emotions." He met Western dancers. He became friends with Margot Fonteyn. He attended rehearsals at the Royal Ballet. He went to modern-dance classes. He saw American Ballet Theatre, which was performing in London at the same time.

He also met Nureyev, who was now living in London and dancing with the Royal Ballet. Nureyev went to see the Kirov performances and managed to get a message to Baryshnikov. "A man we both knew came to me and said, 'Rudolf want to see you if you want to.' " So the next morning Baryshnikov gave the K.G.B. the slip and spent a whole day in Nureyev's big house, overlooking Richmond Park. They talked about ballet, he says: "Russian exercises, French exercises, teachers, class, how long barre—all technique, Rudolf's obsession." At lunch, Nureyev drank a whole bottle of wine by himself. (Baryshnikov couldn't drink. He was performing that night.) Then they went out and lay on the grass and talked about technique some more. "When I left, he gave me a couple of books—one with beautiful Michelangelo drawings—and some scarf he gave me. I was very touched by him." The two men remained friends until Nureyev's death, in 1993.

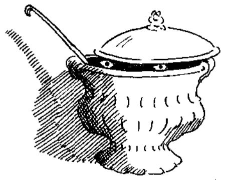
With Makarova's defection, the panic at the Kirov was even worse than it had been with Nureyev's. Sergeyev was removed from his post; a number of brief, fumbling directorships followed. Baryshnikov was watched more and more carefully. If Western dancers came to Leningrad and he went out to dinner with them, this was noted in his file, and the K.G.B. came to talk to him about it. When Western choreographers got in touch with the Kirov to see if he could work with them, they were told he was sick. He was also under pressure to go to political rallies, and privileges in the theatre were made contingent on his attendance: "They'd say, if not this, then not this. Blackmail, you know?"

WHATEVER
KOREN

In 1974, Baryshnikov staged what was called a Creative Evening—a favor sometimes accorded leading dancers. The dancer would commission an evening's worth of short works, often from young choreographers. (Whatever nonconformist ballets made it onto the Kirov stage were usually part of a Creative Evening.) The dancer would also choose the casts, assemble the sets and costumes, and star in the program. Then, after this display of open-mindedness, the administration would normally shelve the ballets. For his Creative Evening, Baryshnikov hired two experimental (and therefore extra-Leningrad) choreographers—Georgi Alexidze, based in Tbilisi, and Mai Murdmaa, an Estonian. There followed several months of anguish as, faced with harassment from the administration and apathy from the demoralized dancers, Baryshnikov tried to get the new ballets onstage. Cast members dropped out; costume designs were argued over (too revealing). Shortly before the première, Baryshnikov was pulled out of rehearsals to go to Moscow for another political rally. After the first preview, he met with the *artsoviet*, and they told him how bad they thought the show was. It was allowed a few performances anyway—all the tickets were already sold—but afterward, at a cast banquet, Baryshnikov burst into tears while he was trying to make a speech to the dancers. "He was talking and crying," Nina Alovert reports in her 1984 book, "Baryshnikov in Russia." "Some people listened to him . . . while others continued to eat, scraping their plates with their forks."

The disappointments apart, Baryshnikov remembers Leningrad as a place of immense tedium: "The most interesting objects were people, saying what they would have done, if they could have. Which is what they talked about if they drank a little. But they didn't drink a little. They drank a lot." In a 1986 interview, Arlene Croce asked Baryshnikov's close friend Joseph Brodsky what would have become of the dancer if he had remained in Russia. "He'd be a ruin by now," Brodsky answered, "both physically and mentally. Physically because of the bottle. . . . Mentally because of that mixture of impotence and cynicism that corrodes everyone there—the stronger you are the worse it is."

Finally, he refused that fate. A few months after the Creative Evening, a group of dancers from the Bolshoi Ballet were leaving for a tour of Canada. The two Bolshoi veterans leading the tour, Raissa Struchkova and her husband, Alexander Lapauri, asked the Kirov if Baryshnikov and his frequent partner Irina Kolpakova could join them, to add heft to the roster. The Kirov refused; at this point, the K.G.B. was barely letting Baryshnikov out of its sight. But Kolpakova intervened, and she was a well-placed person—not just the Kirov's leading ballerina but a former administrator of the company and a member of the Party, with excellent connections. She apparently guaranteed Baryshnikov's safe return, and therefore they were allowed to go. That was the tour from which Baryshnikov did not return. Kolpakova somehow survived as the leading ballerina at the Kirov, but Struchkova and Lapauri were forbidden ever to leave the Soviet Union again. The following year, Lapauri got drunk one night, drove his car into a lamppost, and died. By that time, Baryshnikov was the new sensation of Western ballet, and if, with his fame, he also had a sad look in his eyes the cause was probably not nostalgia for the Soviet Union.

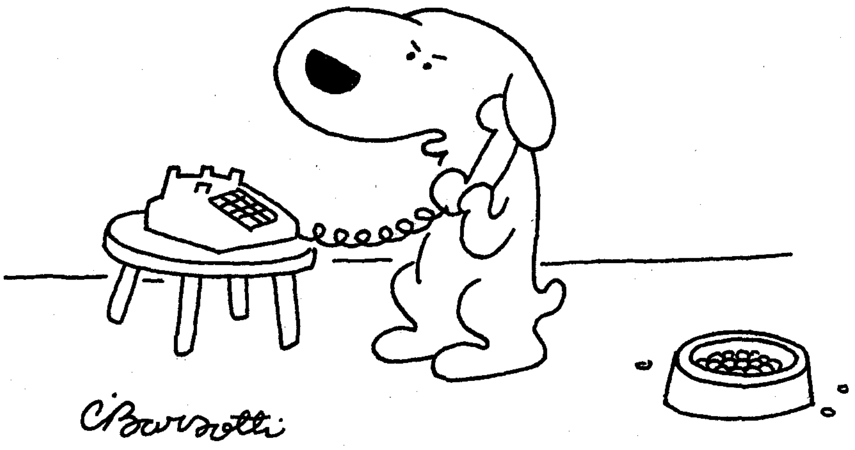


BARYSHNIKOV'S career as a ballet dancer in the seventies and eighties has by now been the subject of hundreds of articles, and of half a dozen books as well. It had three stages: four years as the star of American Ballet Theatre (from 1974 to 1978), one year at George Balanchine's New York City Ballet (from 1978 to 1979), then nine years as the director of American Ballet Theatre (from 1980 to 1989). What he did during this time, above all, was acquire new repertory—the thing he had most wanted to do. In just his first two years in the West, he learned twenty-six new roles, more than he would have been given in a lifetime in the Soviet Union. And the process of working with new choreographers nudged his style in new directions.

Most important was his collaboration with Twyla Tharp. In the nineteen-seventies, Tharp was undergoing a transition from modern dance to ballet. Baryshnikov was also in transition, so he made a perfect subject for her. Starting with the hugely popular "Push Comes to Shove," in 1976, she created for him a series of ballets that seemed to be about the project facing them both: how to marry the Old World dance to the new—in particular, how to join ballet, so outward and perfect, to the inwardness, the ruminations, of jazz. In Tharp's works, Baryshnikov's dancing became more shaded, with more hitches and grace notes, more little thoughts, tucked in between one step and the next. And it was these—the transitions, the secret places between the steps—that seemed to give the dancing its meaning. The big ballet moves were still there, but they were thrown off casually, like something taken for granted. Suddenly, out of some low-down noodling, Baryshnikov would rise up into an utterly perfect leap, and then land and noodle some more. This was surprising, witty, but it also seemed philosophical: a meditation on history, a memory of innocence in a mind past innocence. Appropriately, Tharp had Baryshnikov do this kind of dancing alone. It influenced all his future work, affecting not just him but the choreographers who worked with him after Tharp. The more he became that kind of dancer—inward, alone—the more they made that kind of dance for him.

At the same time, what Tharp made of Baryshnikov was in him already. He *was* a transplant, and alone, and he combined an exquisitely schooled classical technique with what seemed, even before Tharp, an increasingly ruminative quality, a deep sort of cool. He danced that way not only in Tharp's ballets but also in "Giselle," and this gave him a special glamour. Soon he was more than an acclaimed ballet dancer: he was a celebrity, a dreamboat. Crucial to this development was the fact that in his hunger for new outlets he looked beyond live theatre. He made movies ("The Turning Point," in 1977; "White Nights," in 1985; "Dancers," in 1987), and television specials, too, and he turned out to be extremely filmable. Now you didn't have to live in New York to be a Baryshnikov fan, any more than you had to live in Hollywood to be a Sylvester Stallone fan. He was an electronic-media ballet star, the first one in history.

The movies, of course, made use not only of his dancing but of his sex appeal. In all three of his Hollywood films, he was cast as a roué, a heartbreaker. The newspapers, meanwhile, were doing what they could to cover his love life: his rocky affair with Gelsey Kirkland, the ballerina who had



"Must you people always call at dinnertime?"

• •

left New York City Ballet to become his partner at A.B.T..; his long liaison with Jessica Lange (which produced his first child, Aleksandra, named after his mother); his shorter stopovers with many others. "He goes through everybody, he doesn't miss anyone," the post-Baryshnikov Kirkland told a reporter. "I should have been so lucky," Baryshnikov says. But in a male ballet dancer even medium-level skirt-chasing makes good copy. Combined with all the other factors—his "exile," his famous melancholy, his tendency to flee interviewers, his hunger for new projects—it gave him a sort of Byronic profile, as a haunted man, a man of unfulfillable desires, unassuageable griefs. He did not fashion the image, but he fitted it, and nothing could have been more attractive. Posters of him hung in dorm rooms.

In 1979, only a year after he had made the switch from American Ballet Theatre to New York City Ballet, A.B.T. asked him to come back, this time as the head of the company, and he accepted. The story of Baryshnikov's nine-year directorship of A.B.T. is a long, messy, fascinating tale that has never been fully told. Briefly, he tried to modernize the company. He junked the star system and began promoting from within the ranks. He regalvanized the company's notoriously feckless corps de ballet. He brought in new repertory, including modern-dance pieces, plus crossover ballets by the most interesting American choreographers of the moment—people such as Tharp, David Gordon, and Mark Morris. Suddenly, the air began to circulate again at A.B.T. The corps moved with beauty and pride. The young soloists danced like demons. The new works were talked about, argued about. Before, what was interesting at A.B.T. was merely this or that performance, usually by a foreign star. Now, for the first time since the nineteen-fifties, the company itself was a serious subject, an art-producing organization.

Not all of Baryshnikov's reforms were successful, and when they did succeed they weren't necessarily popular. Stars left in huffs. Critics deplored many of the new works. People accused Baryshnikov of trying to turn A.B.T. into New York City Ballet, or into a modern-dance company, or, in any case, into something other than the plump, old-style, stars-and-classics institution that it had been, and which they still loved. The company's deficit swelled. The dancers went out on strike. There was constant friction between Baryshnikov and the board. He had ostensibly been hired as the company's artistic director, but the board also expected him to be its leading dancer and its No. 1 fund-raiser—roles that he declined. (He had repeated injuries; he could not dance as much. As for fund-raising, he loathed it. At parties for patrons, he was often the first person out the door.) And by insisting on a salary of a dollar a year as director—which, given his performance fees, he could afford—he felt he had given himself that right. But the wear on him was severe. In 1989, he gave notice that he would leave in 1990. A few months later, the administration went over his head and fired his second-in-command, Charles France. Baryshnikov resigned in a fury.

WHY had he taken the job in the first place? He is not a natural leader. He can't press the flesh, give the interviews, settle the quarrels, or not willingly. Yet at the time when it came, the offer of the A.B.T. directorship was something he could not refuse. Having seen at the Kirov how badly a ballet company could be directed, he was, of course, tempted to find out if he could run one well. At the same time, there was another factor—his year at New York City Ballet. It has often been claimed that Baryshnikov's experience there was a bitter disappointment to him because by the time he arrived Balanchine was already ill (he died within five years) and could not make new ballets for him. "That's nonsense, absolute nonsense," Baryshnikov says. "That one year was most interesting time in my American career." Part of the pleasure, again, was new repertory. In fifteen months at N.Y.C.B., he learned twenty-odd roles, and though he had trouble fitting into some of them—and not enough time—there were others, particularly Balanchine's "Apollo" and "Prodigal Son," that seemed to have been waiting all those years just for him. He was tremendous, utterly wrenching, as the Prodigal, and he was probably the best Apollo ever to inhabit that role. All the qualities needed to represent Balanchine's boy-god—childlikeness, aloneness, dignity, a sense of high mission—were already in him. He filled the ballet to its skin.

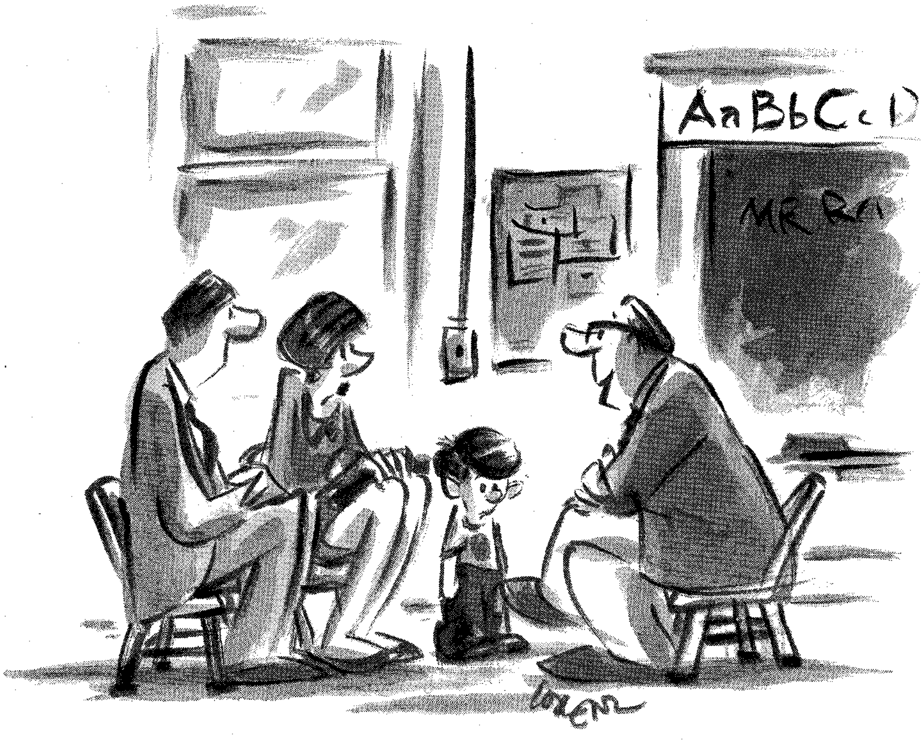
But Baryshnikov says that what was most important to him at N.Y.C.B. was his sense that he had found a home. Balanchine had gone to the same school and made his professional début at the same theatre that Baryshnikov had, and, like him, had decided that to be an artist he must leave Russia. (Baryshnikov defected fifty years, almost to the day, after Balanchine left.) Balanchine had then created in the West what, in Baryshnikov's view, Russian ballet would have become but for the Revolution: modernist classicism. "I am entering the ideal future of the Maryinsky Ballet," he told reporters when he announced his switch to N.Y.C.B. (The Maryinsky was the Kirov's pre-Revolutionary name.) Also, Balanchine seems to have treated him like a son: "He told me, 'I wish I could be a little younger, a little healthier, that we could work more on new pieces, but let's not waste time. Let's do "Harlequinade," let's do "Prodigal," let's do this, let's do that, and think—whatever you want to do.' He cared what I will do."

The story is terrible. The homeless boy found a home, the sonless master found a son, but it was very late. Then came the invitation from A.B.T. Curiously, it was in part because of the gifts Baryshnikov was given at N.Y.C.B. that he decided to leave. For one thing, Balanchine told him he could always come back. "I went to him and we talked for a long time," he recalls. "We talked for an hour one day, and he said, 'Come back tomorrow.' And he was very, sort of—not encouraging me, but said, 'If you can see what you want to do and can deal with people on the board and you have a clear vision, I think you should do it, take this chance.' He said, 'If it doesn't work, it doesn't work. You can come back, anytime. This is your home.'"

But it wasn't just the N.Y.C.B. safety net that emboldened Baryshnikov to go to A.B.T. It was also what he saw as the moral lesson of N.Y.C.B., as taught to him by Balanchine and Jerome Robbins, the company's second ballet master. "Working with Balanchine and Jerry every day—just to see their *dedication* to the institution, the company, the school. Their seriousness, the seriousness of the whole setup, everything about it. Very different from the world which I come from, government-supported company, or commercially set up company like Ballet Theatre. I learn so much. Something about dance ethics, about being a dancer, and the *quality* of the work. I learn how and why to respect choreographic vision and morale of theatre. And that was most important experience. On the surface I was just one of them, and that was fine. But deep inside I experienced extraordinary transformation, and I understand a lot of things, for my future work." Clearly, that was a major reason for his going to A.B.T. He felt he had learned something tremendous, and he wanted to use it. Those who accused him of trying to turn A.B.T. into N.Y.C.B. were partly right.

NEARLY ten years after Baryshnikov's departure from A.B.T., with the current administration trying desperately to restore the old stars-and-classics order, the company still reflects the changes he made: the corps still shows the verve he instilled in it, and the young soloist-level dancers still seem to dance with a sort of wild hope, as if they might actually be promoted. But these are things you can't discuss with Baryshnikov at present. The bitterness of the A.B.T. years is still too keen. What he sees now as the "future work" to which he tried to carry the spirit of New York City Ballet is his present project: directing a modern-dance company. This troupe, the White Oak Dance Project, is a great curiosity. What is a Russian-trained ballet dancer doing directing an American modern-dance company? And why is a man who during the A.B.T. years repeatedly said that he wanted to retire from the stage—that he had had it, that his knee was killing him (it has now been operated on five times)—still performing intensively: an activity that requires him to undergo two hours of physical therapy every day, and, on days when he is performing, four additional hours of warmups and rehearsal, not to speak of the travelling and the room-service dinners? "Well," he said to me in 1990, at the time of White Oak's founding, "I thought there is maybe a couple of years left, for fun." The late philanthropist Howard Gilman, a friend of his, offered to build him a rehearsal studio at the Gilman Foundation's White Oak Plantation, in Florida—in gratitude, Baryshnikov named the troupe after the plantation—and operations were set up in such a way that, unlike A.B.T., the company would not be a noose around his neck. He hired seasoned dancers—people who would not develop eating disorders—and he engaged them on a tour-by-tour basis. The company was not a company; it was a "project." It could vanish at any time. It had no board, no grants, no deficit. Either it paid for itself or Baryshnikov wrote a check. In other words, he set up the least institutional institution he could possibly create—one in which, for the first time, he could present and perform dance without the thousand circumstances that in his experience had compromised those activities.

White Oak has now been in existence for seven years. It is small, usually eight to twelve dancers. It is classy. (It travels with its own five-piece chamber orchestra. No taped music.) It tours for about four months a year, and it has been all around the world. For its first



"Jason is cute as a bug, but he sure is one thickheaded little sucker."

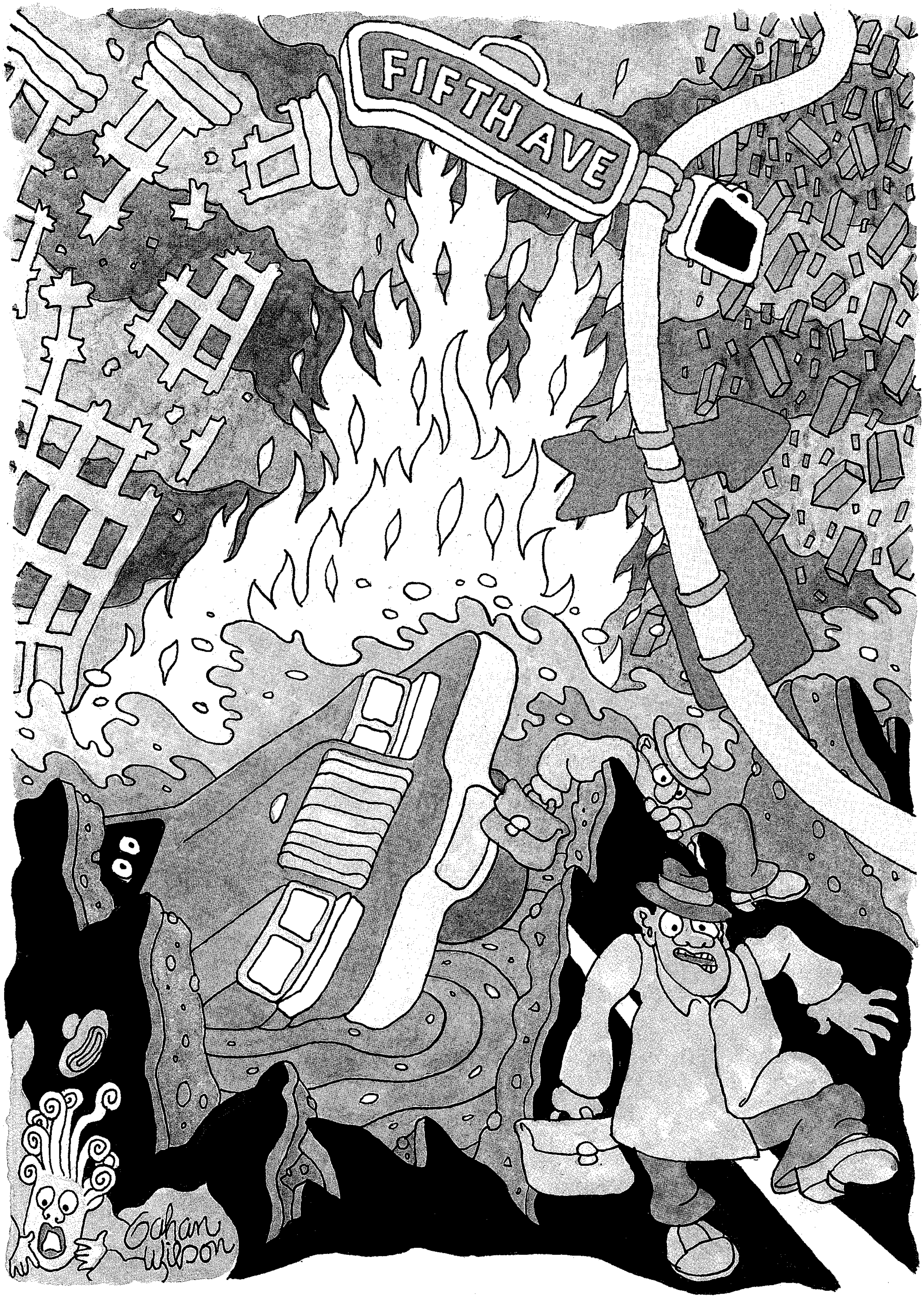
three or four years, the repertory was mostly by "name" choreographers: Martha Graham, Paul Taylor, David Gordon, Twyla Tharp, Mark Morris. (Morris helped Baryshnikov set up the company.) But in the last few years White Oak has begun dangling from the treetops, offering works by avant-gardists almost unknown outside New York and also by beginners—people who are making only their second or third pieces but whom Baryshnikov finds interesting. Still, the concerts regularly sell out, because he is performing in them. Two years ago, I sat in the Kravis Center, in West Palm Beach, Florida, with two thousand Republicans as they watched a big, ambitious, confusing piece called "What a Beauty!," created by Kraig Patterson, a fledgling choreographer who is also a dancer with the Mark Morris Dance Group. The audience looked puzzled. But on this program there was also a solo for Baryshnikov; that is, the audience got to see, for perhaps twelve minutes, the most interesting dancer in the world today performing alone, and therefore they got their money's worth. In a sense, the situation is an artificial one. Baryshnikov probably knows this, but it doesn't seem to bother him. He is having an adventure, presenting new choreography. He is at last putting on his Creative Evening—night after night, with no *artsoviet* to tell him what they think—and if his fame can induce people to come and see it that is fine by him. Recently, I asked him the big question: In the West, had he got what he wanted? Had he found what he came for? "Oh, more than that, more than that," he said. "I never dreamt that I would work with so many extraordinary people." That was all he wanted, just to work with interesting people.

In return for taking only a nominal fee in Riga, Baryshnikov had arranged for the state opera's general-admission prices to be lowered for his performances, but the tickets were still beyond the means of most of Riga's ballet people. (The average salary in Riga is five hundred dollars a month.) So he opened his first dress rehearsal to the staff and pensioners of the opera house and the ballet school, and before the rehearsal began he came out in front of the curtain and addressed them. It was a strange moment—packed with history, like the session in the studio—and in parts of the audience there was probably some resentment against the local boy who made good. The people in that auditorium represented an old tradition, the one that had bred him and from which he had fled. Now they would see the new kind of dancing that he had preferred to theirs. But as he spoke, it was to their world, not his, that he addressed himself. He told them how this solo concert was dedicated to the memory of his mother; how happy he was, after so many years, to perform again on the stage where he had first danced; how pleased he was to present these dances to his theatre colleagues. And he choked up—the first time I ever saw him do so—and had to stop and pause repeatedly before speaking again.

Later, he said to me, "All those people who were sitting there, they were veterans of this society, this space. All these people that I saw when I was young, they were some very good dancers or not that good dancers, some of them good actors, or some of them just beautiful women, or some of them were great character dancers, or some very enthusiastic performers. I knew them by name, I knew their history. Half of those people are dead already, but the other half, in their sixties or their eighties, are sitting in that audience. And they're all of them in me, in my body, in my brain. You know, you learn to dance when you're very young. And in subconsciousness you take pieces from every person. Even worst dancers have two moves, one move, and you say, 'What was that? How did he do that?' And already it's in you. That's why I—that's why it was very moving—because, you know, I owe them." So again he did have a family, but it was dancers. In his second concert, he shared the program with the Latvian state ballet and its school—he did two solos, they did various dances, including some that he had appeared in as a boy (the Garland Waltz from "The Sleeping Beauty," the "Corsaire" pas de deux)—and he donated the proceeds to his old school.

Both shows were a great success, but nothing was quite like the piece that Baryshnikov closed with on the last night. This was Tharp's "Pergolesi"—a smart choice, since, like the other pieces Tharp has made for Baryshnikov, it includes ballet, and so Baryshnikov was able to show the audience his old fireworks. Actually, though, "Pergolesi" includes just about everything: folk dance, eighteenth-century dance, quotes from famous ballets ("Le Spectre de la Rose," "La Sylphide," "Swan Lake"), shimmies, bugaloo, golf swings. He got a chance to do every kind of dance he knew—not just what he had learned in the West but also what he had been taught at the Riga School of Choreography. And I don't know what happened—maybe it was the bringing together of the two halves of his history, or maybe it was relief that this heavily freighted trip was nearly over, or maybe now, at the end, he just wanted to give these people everything he had—but he exploded. I have never seen him so happy onstage, or so wild. ("He's showing off!" said Lisa Rinehart, who was sitting next to me.) He gave them the double barrel turns, he gave them the triple pirouettes in attitude (and then he switched to the other leg and did two more). He rose like a piston; he landed like a lark. He took off like Jerry Lee Lewis; he finished like Jane Austen. From ledge to ledge of the dance he leapt, surefooted, unmindful, a man in love. The audience knew what they were seeing. The air in the theatre thickened almost visibly. Even the members of the orchestra, though their backs were to him, seemed to understand that something unusual was happening. Out of the pit, the beautiful introduction to Pergolesi's "Adriano in Siria" rose like a wave, and he rode it to the finish. By that time, we actually wanted him to stop, so that we could figure out what had happened to us. Latvians, I was told by the locals, almost never give standing ovations. And they never yell "Bravo!" in the theatre; they consider that vulgar. But they yelled "Bravo!" for him, and everyone stood, including the President of the Republic.

Baryshnikov took his curtain calls with the members of the Latvian National Opera Ballet, they in their dirndls and harem pants, he in his Isaac Mizrahi jerseys—messengers of the two worlds created when Europe broke in half. It will never wholly mend, any more than Baryshnikov, child of that break, was ever able to find an artistic home. But it is hard to regret his fate. Homelessness turned him inward, gave him to himself. Then dance, the substitute home, turned him outward, gave him to us. ◆


FIFTH AVE
Gahan Wilson

"Still, you gotta admit crime is down."

A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE GANGES' NEXT LIFE

India's holiest body of water is dangerously polluted. Will a Hindu priest and an engineer from California be able to cleanse the sacred river?

BY ALEXANDER STILLE

SHORTLY after dawn, Veer Bhadra Mishra, a silver-haired Brahman in a traditional Indian dhoti, or loincloth, walks slowly and stiffly down a long, steep stairway from his temple in the city of Varanasi to the banks of the Ganges, as he has done almost every day of his fifty-eight years. All around him, along a seven-kilometre stretch of the river dominated by majestic, crumbling temples, palaces, and ashrams, the pageant of Indian life passes by. Tens of thousands of bathers, at eighty different ghats, or landing areas, plunge into India's holiest body of water. White-bearded ascetics raise their emaciated arms to salute the sun god; housewives in bright-colored saris toss garlands of marigolds to Mother Ganges, the river goddess; adolescent boys in G-strings do pushups, flex their muscles, and wash their bodies; naked children splash in the water; and families carry their dead to the "burning ghats" to cremate them and scatter their ashes on the river.

The tug of these traditions, some of which go back three thousand years, to the founding of Varanasi (also known as Banaras), the holiest city in India, pulls Mishra to the river, despite having suffered a broken thigh, which makes walking painful. But on this particular day, in early March, he remains on the bank, because of a nagging cold and also because of the poor quality of the water: it is filled with raw sewage, human and industrial waste, the charred remains of bodies, and animal carcasses. Normally, Mishra tries to perform five full immersions—five is an auspicious number, he explains. But even when he is feeling well he holds his nose as he puts his head in, and he no longer drinks the river water.

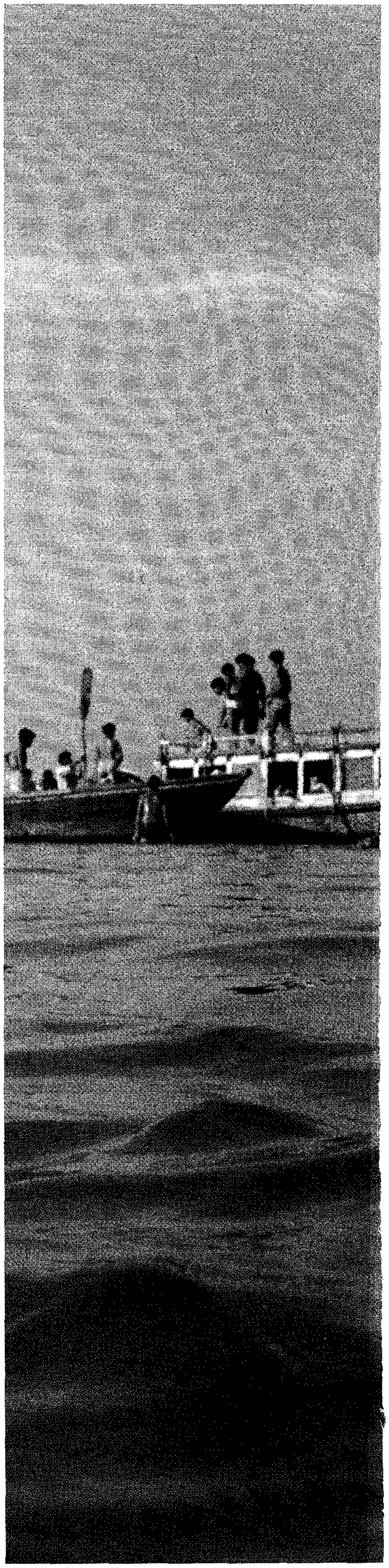
"There is a struggle and turmoil inside my heart," Mishra says. "I want to take a holy dip. I need it to live. The day does not begin for me without the holy dip. But, at the same time, I know what is B.O.D."—biochemical oxygen demand—"and I know what is fecal coliform." He is referring to some of the scientific indices of water pollution.

For Mishra, this struggle of the heart is particularly acute because he has a complex double identity: he is the mahant—the head—of Sankat Mochan Temple, one of the principal temples of Varanasi, and he is also a professor of hydraulic engineering at Banaras Hindu University.

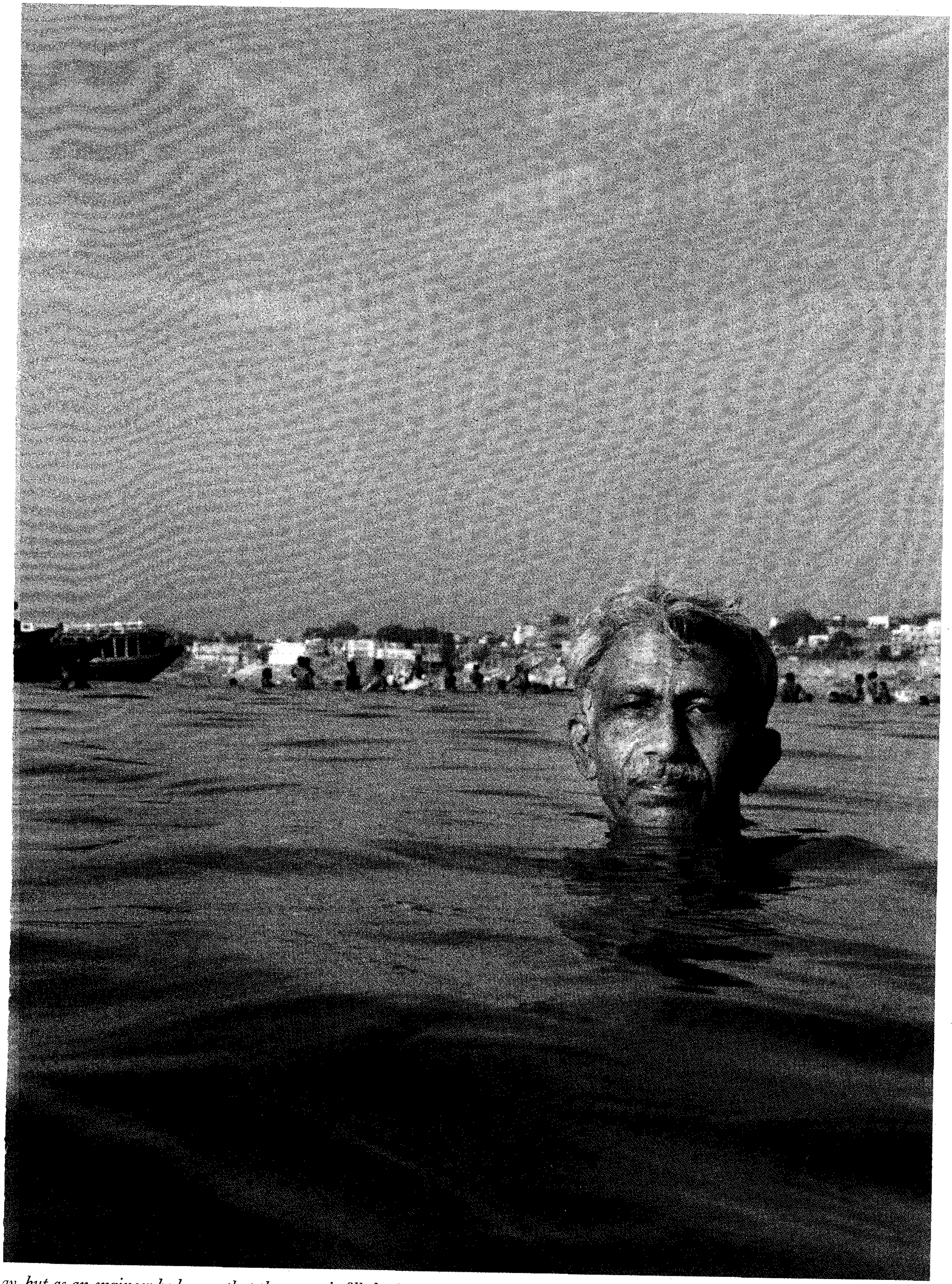
As a devout Hindu, Mishra views the Ganges as a goddess, a river that, because of its divine origin, is pure and purifies all those faithful who immerse themselves in her. Just as Muslims vow to visit Mecca, it is the dream of all good Hindus to visit Varanasi and bathe in the Ganges at least once in their lives. It is said that one drop of Ganges water carried by a breeze that lands on your cheek hundreds of miles away is enough to cleanse a lifetime of sins. All Hindus seek to have their ashes scattered along the Ganges at their deaths, and it is considered particularly lucky to die in Varanasi, because from there your soul will travel straight to Heaven.

But, as a scientist, Mishra cannot forget what he knows about the condition of the river water. Up in the temple complex behind him stands a state-of-the-art laboratory where bacteria cultures are being grown in special incubators in order to measure the level of pathogens at various points along the river. In some places at Varanasi, the fecal-coliform count has been known to reach a hundred and seventy million bacteria per hundred millilitres of water—a terrifying three hundred and forty thousand times the acceptable level of five hundred per hundred millilitres.

Some five hundred million people—one out of every twelve people in the world—now live in the basin of the Ganges and its tributaries. A hundred and fourteen cities dump their raw sewage directly into the river, which starts at Nepal, in the Himalayas, flows fifteen hundred miles through India and Bangladesh, and emp-



As a devout Hindu, Mishra performs five immers



ay, but as an engineer he knows that the water is filled with sewage, human remains, and industrial waste. Photograph by Raghu Rai.

ties into the Bay of Bengal at Calcutta. Not surprisingly, waterborne illnesses—hepatitis, amebic dysentery, typhoid, and cholera—are common killers, helping to account for the deaths of more than two million Indian children each year.

What is particularly disturbing about these numbers is that they come at the end of a ten-year government cleanup project called the Ganga Action Plan—a project that most people, even in government, concede has failed. Now the government is preparing for the second phase of the Ganga Action Plan, and Mishra is trying to keep the government from repeating its mistakes: he is pushing a new plan to save the river.

The battle to clean the Ganges is about much more than the environmental future of a river. Just as the river is a symbol of India, its cleanup is a test of India's condition fifty years after independence, and its outcome may answer some of the fundamental questions about the country's future. Will India (and other parts of the Third World) master its problems, or will it descend into a nightmarish Malthusian struggle over diminishing natural resources? Will India find creative ways to preserve its rich cultural traditions, or will it become homogenized into the new global economy? Will its ancient rituals, such as bathing in the Ganges, survive beyond the next century?

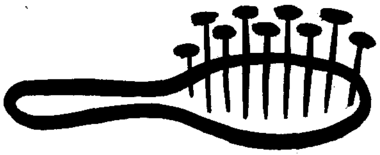
Varanasi is one of the oldest continuously occupied cities in the world, contemporary with the dynasties of ancient Egypt or Mesopotamia. But while no one sacrifices to the Egyptian sun god Ra or to Baal anymore, some sixty thousand devotees take the holy dip each day in Varanasi, lighting fires along the shores of the Ganges to Lord Shiva, the god who is believed to have caught the river in the tangled locks of his hair as it descended to earth from Heaven.

"Please consider them an endangered species, these people who still have this faith, this living relationship with the river," Mishra says with passion. "If birds can be saved, if plants can be saved, let this species of people be saved by granting them holy water."

Mishra, as the mahant of Sankat Mochan Temple, is himself the living link to one of Varanasi's most cherished legacies. He is spiritual heir to a greatly revered Hindu saint, Tulsi Das, who in the sixteenth century wrote a famous Hindi version of the Ramayana, one of the most important texts of Hinduism, originally written in Sanskrit. Mahantji, as Mishra is almost universally known in Varanasi (Indians add the suffix "ji" to a name to denote affection and respect), lives, with his family, in the house that Tulsi Das built, overlooking the Ganges and above the landing Tulsi Ghat. The house contains an original manuscript of Tulsi Das's Ramayana and a pair of the saint's wooden sandals. Mishra's position as mahant, which has been passed from father to son in his family for many generations, accords him a semidivine status among the disciples of Tulsi Das. As Mishra is speaking about things like biomass and biogas, a steady stream of worshippers stop by to touch his feet—a traditional sign of respect in India.

Mishra wears his status lightly. He is a person of exquisite courtesy and genuine warmth, without a hint of arrogance or self-regard. He has a handsome tan face, dark-brown eyes, an elegant head of white hair with a shock of black in the center, and a gray mustache. If his lower body is slow and awkward, from his broken thigh, his face is highly mobile and expressive, as if to underscore the Hindu belief that the body is but an imperfect vessel for the noble spirit. He smiles easily and laughs a lot, frequently at himself. He jokes about his "throne room"—the name his Western friends have teasingly given a room where he receives guests. It is in fact a modestly decorated room on the ground floor of his house, in which a large wooden platform covered with mattresses provides the mahant a place to sit cross-legged or lean back on a cushion. He dresses almost invariably in nothing but a light-blue dhoti—a single swath of cotton that wraps around his waist and covers his shoulders like a toga—and generally goes barefoot. The one exception is when he lectures at the university: then he puts on a pair of loafers and a brown Western-style suit, in which he looks somewhat ill at ease.

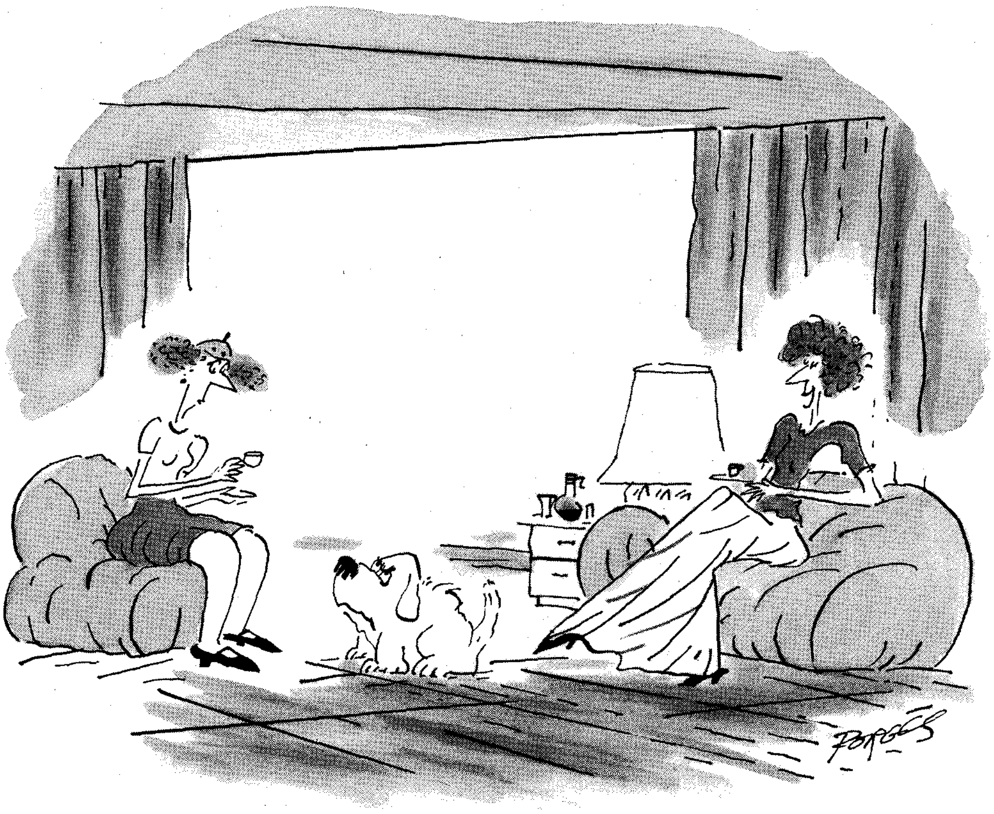
In 1982, after years of speaking out about the deteriorating condition of the river, Mishra founded, with two other engineers from Banaras Hindu University, the Sankat Mochan Foundation, a private secular organization dedicated to cleaning the Ganges. This has taken Mishra far from the traditional, religious role of mahant and brought him into contact with politicians in New Delhi, American State Department officials, and environmentalists and scientists around the world. Overcoming a certain amount of criticism and ridicule among some Hindus in Varanasi, he has travelled to places like Sydney, New York, and San Francisco in order to attend water-resource conferences and explore alternative waste technologies. Like India itself on the eve of the millennium, Mishra is trying to incorporate what is best from the West in order to preserve the Hindu traditions that he loves.



In his attempt to clean the Ganges, the mahant finds himself teamed with a seemingly unlikely partner—William Oswald, an emeritus professor of engineering at Berkeley, who is a gray-haired seventy-eight-year-old with elephantlike ears, two hearing aids, an impish smile, and an earthy sense of humor. On being told that the Hindus believed that they would go straight to Heaven if they died in Varanasi, Oswald replied, "They'll get there a lot faster if they go in that water."

Mishra and Oswald were brought together by Friends of the Ganges, a San Francisco-based group of environmentalists who have been working closely with the Sankat Mochan Foundation to help find a solution to Varanasi's water-pollution problems.

Oswald is the pioneer of a kind of "back to the future" approach to modern urban waste, called Advanced Integrated Wastewater Pond Systems, in which sewage is treated in a carefully engineered series of natural algae ponds. Waste decomposes naturally in water through a combination of microbial fermentation and photosynthesis. It works like this: In a pond, bacteria grow on sewage and, in the process, decompose it into its elements—carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen, oxygen, etc. Algae in the pond assimilate these nutrients and, as their green biomass grows, produce oxygen through photosynthesis. Algae are the most efficient producers of oxygen on the planet: they supply more than one and a half times their weight in oxygen, and are the largest single source of atmospheric oxygen in the air we breathe. The oxygen that algae produce sustains the aquatic life of a pond or a river; fish both feed on algae and breathe the oxygen that algae produce; bacteria also use the oxygen to keep the process of decomposition going in a self-sustaining cycle of creation and decay.



"He's not a biter, he's a humper."

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Oswald is to algae what Michael Jordan is to basketball. When he and I first met, in Delhi, he excused himself in advance for not remembering my name: "For every new person's name I learn, I forget the name of an alga." Back in the late sixties, at the request of the United States Air Force's space program, Oswald invented something called the Algatron—a system for growing algae in space to provide oxygen for astronauts. Although it has been tried out only on mice in a California laboratory, Oswald proved, in principle, that you could create a self-sustaining ecosystem in a weightless environment. In his view, algae are among the great unacknowledged heroes of the planet. Algae and bacteria have a symbiotic relationship that performs miracles in converting toxic or disease-carrying waste into oxygen, new plant life, and valuable protein for other forms of life to feed on.

Oswald's system is not a utopian environmentalist's fantasy. Before the age of mechanical treatment plants, ponds were one of the primary means of taking care of sewage. They are cheaper than mechanical treatment plants and clean wastewater more thoroughly, but they generally require more land. As a result, most major United States cities have switched to mechanized plants in recent decades, relegating pond systems to smaller cities and towns—some seventy-five hundred of them throughout the United States.

Oswald has devoted his life to devising pond systems that improve on nature's by handling waste in an accelerated fashion while using less space. He has created a system that moves water, by means of gravity and paddle wheels, through a linked sequence of ponds, each with its own special environment, meant to encourage a particular kind of waste treatment. The first group of ponds are dug very deep, in order to create a dark, sunless environment without oxygen, where anaerobic bacteria decompose the heavier solid wastes. The second group are shallow, so that all the water is exposed to sunlight in order to encourage algae to grow through photosynthesis and kill off harmful bacteria. The third ponds are deep, still ponds, in which the algae settle and can be easily "harvested," to be fed to pigs or chickens, or else left in the water for fish farming. In the final phase, the water passes into large, reservoirlike ponds from which it will be reused in irrigation.

This technology appears ideally suited to India, one of whose most abundant resources is sunlight. And it seems fitting that the scientific key to the modern problems of Varanasi, one of India's most ancient cities, could be one of the most ancient and also one of the simplest life-forms: algae.

In 1994, Mishra travelled to Northern California and visited three pond systems built by Oswald. Last summer, Earl Kessler, a member of the State Department's Agency for International Development, or AID, sent a delegation as well. Kessler was sufficiently impressed to commission both Oswald and Mishra's Sankat Mochan Foundation to prepare a feasibility study for a waste-pond system at Varanasi. Last spring, Oswald and his partner, Bailey Green, an acquaintance of mine, were scheduled to fly to India in order to complete the study and try to win Indian government support for the plan, and I decided to accompany them.

When we arrived, Mishra and two of his close colleagues at the foundation presented the American engineers with a surveyor's map they had prepared of the area where the ponds would be constructed, with carefully traced markings for ground elevation and soil composition. Oswald and Green have proposed a system of thirty-two ponds in a dried-up river channel near the island of Dhab, downstream from Varanasi. They spread the map on a table in a guesthouse overlooking a grassy lawn where a colored tent and a marigold-festooned stage were decked out for the foundation's annual festival of *dhrupad*—the most ancient form of Indian classical music—which was to begin later that evening.

As they pored over the map, Oswald worried about possible hitches in the successful completion of the pond project, which, if it should be carried out, would be the largest of his career. "Are you sure that a dike that is seventy-five metres above sea level will be high enough for the monsoon?" he asked. During the last thirty years, Oswald had seen many ambitious pond projects in the Third World evaporate for a host of technical, political, and financial reasons. But, after fifteen years of work, the mahant was anxious that the project's momentum not be slowed by nettlesome details. "We will show that Dr. Oswald's pond system can work even in India," he said grandly.

"I don't want to be a hero," responded Oswald the pragmatist. "I just want to be right."

The musicians outside began to tune up their instruments, and the conversation about the soil composition of the proposed pond site continued to the drone of sitars. The musicians played until six-thirty in the morning, and as we lay under our mosquito nets later that night ancient ragas ran through our waking and sleeping thoughts.

The following afternoon, we set off by boat down the Ganges to examine the site where the ponds would be constructed. There were about twenty of us on a long, flat, beat-up wooden boat with a put-put motor and a canvas sheet stretched over us for protection against the midday sun. Besides us visitors and the mahant, the passengers were mostly volunteers from the Varanasi area, devotees of the temple who also donated their time to the Clean the Ganges campaign. (The foundation can afford only two full-time staff members. Its laboratory was provided through the efforts of the Swedish chapter of Friends of the Ganges, and one of Mishra's household servants doubles as a laboratory assistant.)

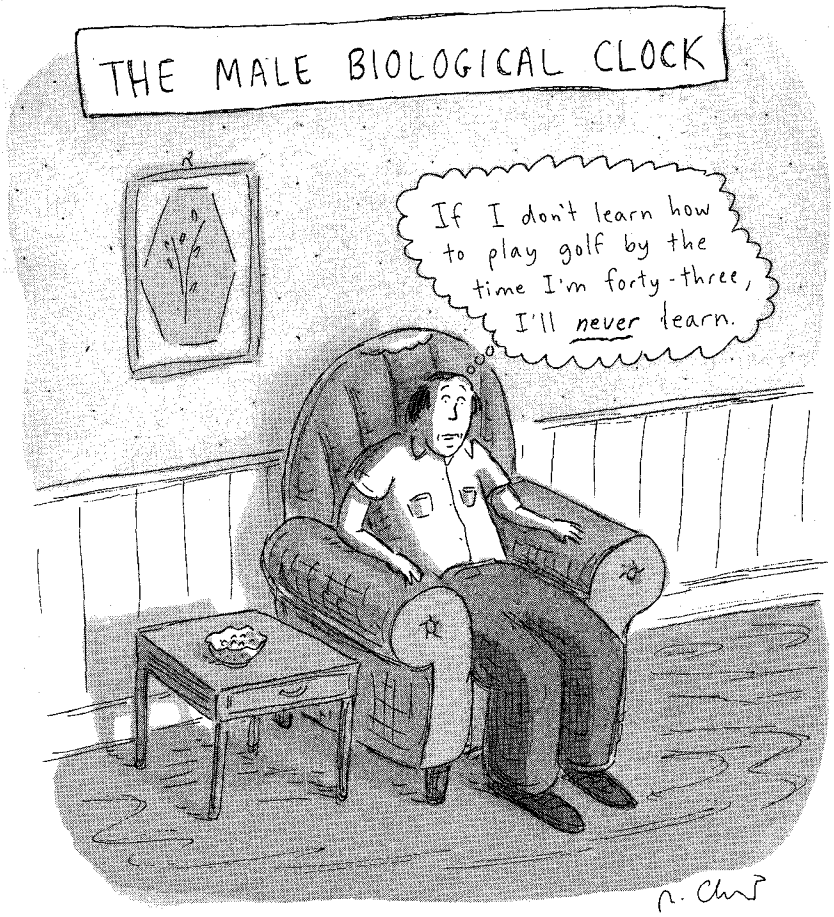
Because Tulsi Ghat is at the far south end of Varanasi, the trip took us in slow motion past the entire city. The ghats rise up dramatically out of the water, at the top of tall stairways, and so serve as a kind of two-way theatre: people on the ghats observe the activity on the river below, while those passing by in boats observe the doings of people up above.

Although Varanasi is the chief center of Hindu learning and culture, almost every religious practice and every region of India are represented along the river. There is a ghat for the Dandi Panth ascetics and a ghat leading to a temple surrounded by erotic Nepalese sculptures. There are pagodalike ghats reminiscent of southern India, and fortresslike ghats, which recall the Mogul conquerors of the north. Some ghats are old and are built of sombre, earth-colored stone; others are made of modern concrete and are painted white, yellow, pink, red, or green.

Along with all the different religious practices, all the different forms of pollution along the Ganges were similarly evident. There were ghats where herds of water buffalo cooled off in the water. At others, washerwomen rinsed out their laundry on the shore while a rainbow of colored saris lay drying on the steps. Hinduism contains many rituals of purification and hygiene, including a prohibition against using soap in the Ganges, which is widely ignored.

After a few minutes, we slowly passed the first of the burning ghats. At all hours of the day and night, the funeral pyres burn on the shore, with family members circling the fire and saying prayers. When the firewood has been consumed, the remains of the dead are consigned to the river to begin their journey from this world to the next, but in some cases the bodies may not have been fully consumed. On the average, about forty thousand traditional funerals are performed on the banks of the Ganges at Varanasi each year. In addition, about three thousand other dead bodies—those of people too poor to afford a funeral—and about nine thousand dead cattle are tossed into the river annually. As part of the government's Ganga Action Plan, close to twenty-nine thousand turtles were released at Varanasi a few years ago, in the hope that they would consume any decomposing body parts. But the turtle farm is now empty, and there are no turtles in the river. Many people suspect that they were poached for food.

The government cleanup, however, did include the building of an electric crematorium at one of the two main burning ghats, in order to cut back on the traditional funerals. The program seems to be working, for the lines in front of the brick crematorium are much longer than the ones in front of the firewood sellers. This, in Mishra's view, is an instance of India's adaptability. "The reasons are economic," he explained. "A traditional funeral today will cost between fifteen hundred and two thousand rupees, and the charge for the electric crematorium is seventy rupees."


THE MALE BIOLOGICAL CLOCK
If I don't learn how to play golf by the time I'm forty-three, I'll *never* learn.

The traditional forms of Indian life visible along the shores of the Ganges—the funeral pyres, the water buffalo, the washerwomen—are not the principal source of pollution at Varanasi. Looking closely, even along the bathing ghats you can see large sewage pipes draining directly into the river. The city's trunk sewer, which was built by the British in 1917, is strained beyond capacity. As recently as fifty years ago, the population of Varanasi was just over a quarter million; now it is a million four hundred thousand, and growing.

Upon leaving Varanasi, we reached the point where the Varuna River meets the Ganges, and there the surface of the water was bubbling like soup on a low flame—

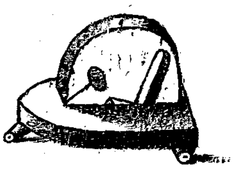
raw sewage turning into methane gas. Just a mile or so up the Varuna is a huge new pumping station, which is supposed to transport Varanasi's sewage to a large treatment plant a few miles downstream. Able to handle but a fraction of the city's two hundred million litres of sewage per day, the plant pumps the sewage of Varanasi up several hundred yards, only to dump the bulk of it into the Varuna, where it then travels right back to the Ganges.

A few miles farther downstream, there was a sudden explosion of algae blooms, in such unnatural quantities that for several hundred yards the Ganges took on the unhealthy appearance of a swamp. It is here that the Indian government has placed its treatment plant, but the plant only performs what in the waste business is called "primary treatment"—the equivalent of going through just the first of Oswald's four ponds. Because the plant's "cleaned" effluent is still full of sewage and harmful bacteria, it, together with the hot Indian sun, stimulates the growth of far more algae than the natural resources of the river can absorb. As they decompose they consume, rather than create, oxygen, putting a strain on the marine life of the river. This condition shows up when the oxygen level of the water is tested in a laboratory: biological oxygen demand, or B.O.D., is one of the principal measures of water pollution. Where pollution places a high demand on oxygen, less is available for fish and other organisms.

The central government, in New Delhi, has recently spent about a hundred and fifty million dollars building Western-style high-technology wastewater plants along the Ganges, like the one we just passed, which are particularly ill-suited to Indian conditions. The treatment facilities run on electricity, and when the power goes out—as happens several times a day in many Indian cities—they stop operating. Similarly, the plants become overwhelmed during the monsoon season and simply shut down. Even when they are working, the facilities are so expensive and so difficult to operate that many of the cities say they cannot afford to maintain them.

In Varanasi, sewage is backing up into people's toilets or forming fetid puddles in their yards and in the streets. Local residents became so enraged about a year ago that they forced a city water engineer to stand for several hours in a pool of sewage in order to better acquaint him with the problem.

After decades of supporting this type of expensive, high-technology project, the United States State Department is now a proponent of "sustainable technology"—projects like Oswald's ponds, which cost less, use little electricity, and can be maintained with relatively little training by local people. (The pond system designed for Varanasi is estimated to cost between ten and sixteen million dollars, as opposed to twenty-five million for the city's mechanized treatment plant, which handles only a quarter to a third as much waste.)



In 1985, the government in New Delhi also adopted Western waste-treatment technology without considering the radically different ways that people use the rivers in India. It is still common in Europe for sewage-treatment plants to discharge partly cleaned effluent into rivers, but the inhabitants of London and Paris would not dream of bathing in or drinking out of the Thames or the Seine. "They have made such blunders," the mahant said. "It is like a theme park of failed technology."

ALTHOUGH our trip downriver to the island of Dhab was only about ten miles long, it took us nearly five hours, because the boat kept running aground. With each successive stop, more members of our party were out in the river pushing the boat and fewer of us were in it. The small Western contingent was calculating the probability of catching some dread tropical disease if it was forced to take an unanticipated holy dip to reach shore.

The Ganges is generally a mile wide throughout its course, but it becomes shallow in the dry months leading up to the summer monsoon. The problem has grown worse in recent years as more and more river water has been diverted for irrigation. Throughout our journey, we saw large pipes sucking water out of the Ganges toward distant fields. While India has twenty per cent of the world's people, it has only four per cent of the world's fresh water. With its population approaching a billion, the country is scheduled to overtake China as the world's most populous nation, and its future growth could mean mass starvation. Some three hundred million Indians are already classified as "Food Insecure"—a bad monsoon away from starvation.

Under these circumstances, wars over water—a prospect that haunts the twenty-first century—have already become a reality in India. India and Bangladesh have come close to breaking off diplomatic relations over the use of Ganges water. And in 1994 the Indian state of Haryana simply diverted a sizable portion of New Delhi's water supply, claiming it needed the water for irrigation. The struggle for water can only get worse as India's growing urban population demands Western standards of plumbing. The seventeen five-star hotels of New Delhi consume eight hundred thousand litres of water daily—enough to fulfill the requirements of a million three hundred thousand slum dwellers, who have no plumbing whatever. And as the number of flush toilets increases so will the amount of sewage.

As I was contemplating the prospect of ecological Armageddon during our on-again, off-again voyage in the shallow waters of the Ganges, we heard the distant sound of a brass band. A large crowd was massed on the banks of the island of Dhab, and, even though it was nearly sunset and they had been waiting all afternoon, they greeted the arrival of the Sankat Mochan Foundation and its Western guests with triumphal music and wild jubilation.

Dhab is one of the pockets of rural India that have been largely left out of the past fifty years of development: it has no electricity and no year-round bridge to the mainland. About ten miles long, Dhab, with a population of forty thousand, has a curious geographical configuration: it is an island during the rainy season and a tenuous part of the mainland the rest of the year. As the course of the Ganges gradually shifted over centuries toward the southeast, it exposed a former channel to the north of the island, which can be crossed during the drier months of the year but still floods during the summer. This wide former river channel is sandy and infertile, and has no proper road. It is here that the Sankat Mochan Foundation would like to put its system of wastewater ponds. The plan also involves building three main roads across the dikes of the ponds to connect Dhab to the mainland—roads that cable could be laid in, providing the electric spark that would connect the people of Dhab to the rest of the world.

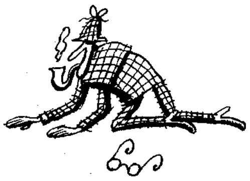
Amid cries of "Hail to the gods!" we climbed up the banks of a shore thick with eagerly waiting crowds, who were waving painted banners and were ready to hand us armfuls of carefully stitched flower wreaths. So we proceeded slowly, in cars sent ahead by the foundation, stopping at every village cluster for a new celebration. Again and again, there were bands and painted banners, and entire canopies of marigolds. At each stop, mothers sent their children forward to touch our feet, lay on wreaths, and say prayers.

It was dark before we reached our final stop and the main ceremony, in which we were invited to eat a sticky orange sweet and drink some lemon tea. The mahant and the elected chiefs of the villages read a declaration. The people of Dhab stated their support for the Oswald pond project. The declaration ended with the fervent hope that this good deed would bring them *mukti* and *bhukti*—liberation in the next life and happiness in this one.

The wild sense of expectation and hope on the island—the sense that the pond project would instantly transform people's lives for the better—was both moving and sobering. While there is a legitimate worry about the levelling effect of every remote outpost's plugging into the world grid, Dhab's desire to be part of the wider world is palpable and overpowering. On a clear night, villagers on certain parts of the island can see the lights of a distant railroad yard. They stand and watch this bright symbol of the world they yearn to be a part of—a world of lights, power tools, modern appliances, and, of course, television.

"Our moral responsibility is now very great," the mahant said as we set off for Varanasi amid final cheers.

THE next ten days back at Tulsi Ghat were filled with activity on various fronts. The foundation members were trying to set up a series of high-level seminars in which to present the American engineers and their plan to local officials, including the mayor of Varanasi; to technocrats at the Water Commission in Lucknow, the capital of the state of Uttar Pradesh, the region in which Varanasi lies; and to national ministers, politicians, and environmental activists at a major conference in New Delhi. Oswald and Green were working day and night with their pencils and calculators, as they drew up a new set of site-specific engineering plans and came up with precise figures on the money and the land that would be needed to build the pond system. Staff members and volunteers of the foundation were trying to track down things like the cost of moving a ton of earth in Varanasi.



Also during those ten days a stream of special visitors passed through the mahant's "throne room": engineers, village chiefs, politicians, local bureaucrats, university professors—anyone thought to have access to some important decision-making body. In between meetings, the mahant was on his cordless phone, lining up support and making sure that people who had promised to attend a particular meeting would actually show up.

The day after we returned from the island, Mishra received a phone call from a member of the Indian parliament representing Varanasi, who was eager to hear about the trip. The people of Dhab had evidently become so disappointed with the traditional politicians that they would no longer receive them. It seemed that the mahant had inadvertently uncovered a small political gold mine—a unified group of approximately twenty-five thousand highly motivated voters. As a result, the mahant found himself in the role of power broker—a role in which he felt some discomfort. "We are not political people, and it is still not clear to me what we should do with this consensus," he explained to me, as we sat in the throne room overlooking the Ganges.

And yet perhaps the only way to realize the pond project is through judiciously applied political pressure. "We have to have a more effective way to influence the politicians and harness the support we have built," Mishra said. So far, the political work appears to be paying off. The foundation has succeeded in winning the support of both the central government in New Delhi and the municipal government of Varanasi. The final obstacle to building the ponds remains the state government of Uttar Pradesh.

In the midst of all this engineering, organizing, and politicking, life at Tulsi Ghat continued as if it were a medieval village within the city. Devotees trooped through at all hours to worship at one of several pagodalike shrines in the courtyard. Sanskrit students passed through on their way to a school that the temple runs. Behind Mishra's house is an arena with a round corrugated-tin roof, in which each morning young men practiced a traditional form of Hindu wrestling. Sacred cows also wandered through, while goats walked into the shrines to eat the flowers that worshippers had left for the gods.

While this ritual-filled life moved at the stately pace of the Ganges, the activity of the Sankat Mochan Foundation marched to the high-pitched squeal of the fax machine. Mishra himself shuttled between these two worlds, finding time, despite long meetings and conferences, to keep up his religious duties, from his holy dip at dawn to the closing ceremonies at the temple, which sometimes did not end until midnight. Somewhere in between, he and I managed to have a series of conversations about his own double role as holy man and environmental activist, and about his own curious blend of science and Hinduism. "Even in my wildest dreams, I would not have thought that something like this would happen in my life," the mahant said, with a burst of laughter. Nothing in Mishra's early life prepared him for a life of science and political activism. "My father and my grandfather had the traditional education, which means Sanskrit and wrestling and music," he said. "There was no reason to deviate." In 1952, Mishra's father died, and Mishra, only fourteen, had the role of mahant thrust upon him. His destiny seemed even more fixed. "From that time onward, there would be a distance between me and the other people," he said, rather ruefully. "Because of traditional respect, even old people would come and touch my feet to pay respect, so there was no intimate interaction. My life was very protected."

When Mishra reached the age of seventeen, however, he made a radical and unprecedented move: he enrolled at Banaras Hindu University. "I don't know why this happened," he said, his voice rising with genuine perplexity. "In my family, I am the first person to go to the university." When he got there, his path became even more unusual: he started taking science courses. "Why I studied physics, chemistry, and mathematics, I don't know. Why I became a civil engineer with a specialty in hydraulics, I don't know. I can now see this as a scheme of the god."

ALTHOUGH there are no other known cases of someone's combining the vocation of mahant and that of civil engineer, it seems typical of India's uncanny ability to preserve its culture while surviving countless foreign occupations and absorbing new influences, from the Persians and the Islamic Mogul conquerors to the departure of the British, in 1947. The Indian writer Gita Mehta, in her latest book "Snakes and Ladders," tells a story that sums up this quality of Indian culture very well:

There were two men who were considered the holiest in India, one called the Diamond-Hard Ascetic and the other called the Field of Experience. The Diamond-Hard Ascetic challenged his rival to a duel to prove that he was the holiest of all. I have become so hard through countless austerities, he said, that you can strike me with a sword of steel. And indeed the sword bounced off him. When he took the sword to the Field of Experience, it simply went through him, at which point the Ascetic conceded that the other man was holier.

The Field of Experience is India: seeming to offer no resistance, it is nevertheless impregnable. Other traditional societies—like China, Burma, and nations governed under strict Islamic law—preserve themselves by steeling themselves against the outside world, but they may become much more vulnerable as they begin to open up. India is a wide-open society, through which numerous armies have marched, and yet it remains remarkably itself.

India's economy, which has been frequently written off, came to life as a result of a policy of liberalization started in 1991. Growing at the rate of six per cent a year ever since, India has been enjoying a boom similar to China's, but it has done so while remaining the world's largest democracy. Though its problems, in their scale, are almost unimaginable, so are its assets. It has more poor people than any other country in the world, but it also has a huge well-educated middle class. More than a hundred million Indians speak English, the lingua franca of the computer world, which is more than the number of speakers of English in Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand combined. It is not an accident that software developers have turned to India for highly skilled software engineers. Half a world away, computer companies in Silicon Valley send their work problems to technicians in Bangalore, and those technicians work on them all day while the people in California sleep. Bill Gates arrived in Delhi while I was there, and his arrival was accorded the pomp of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee during the days of Raj.

"Mommy can be tough like Janet Reno. But she can also be vulnerable like Al Gore."

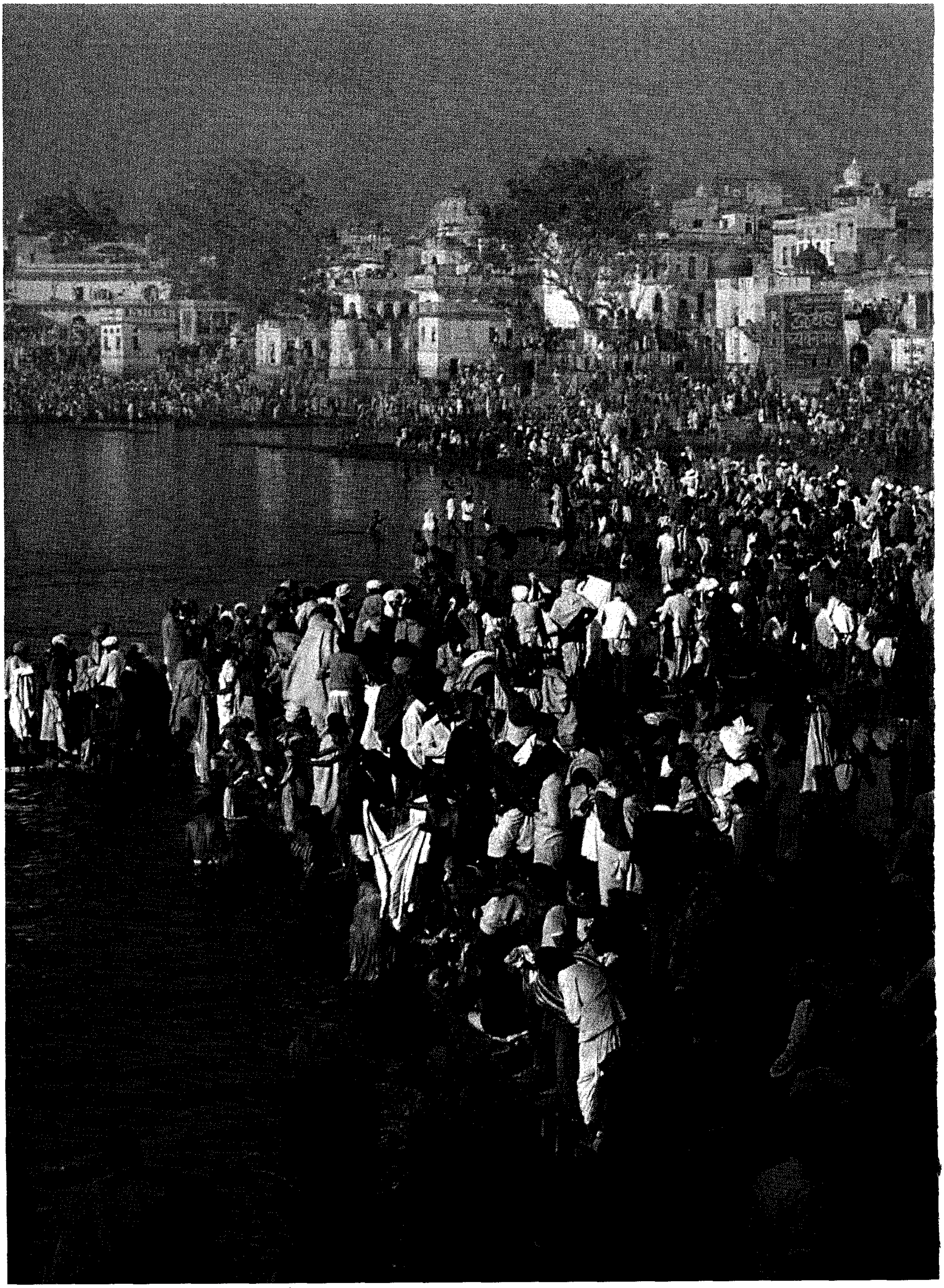
• •

"These things—satellite television, this Internet surfing—are with us whether we like it or not," Mishra says. "They are means. They can be used in a beautiful way. It is as if you were riding a lion—you should be strong enough to tame the lion, or it will eat you." In keeping with that spirit, the Sankat Mochan Foundation is believed to be the first group in Varanasi to sign up for an E-mail and Internet connection.

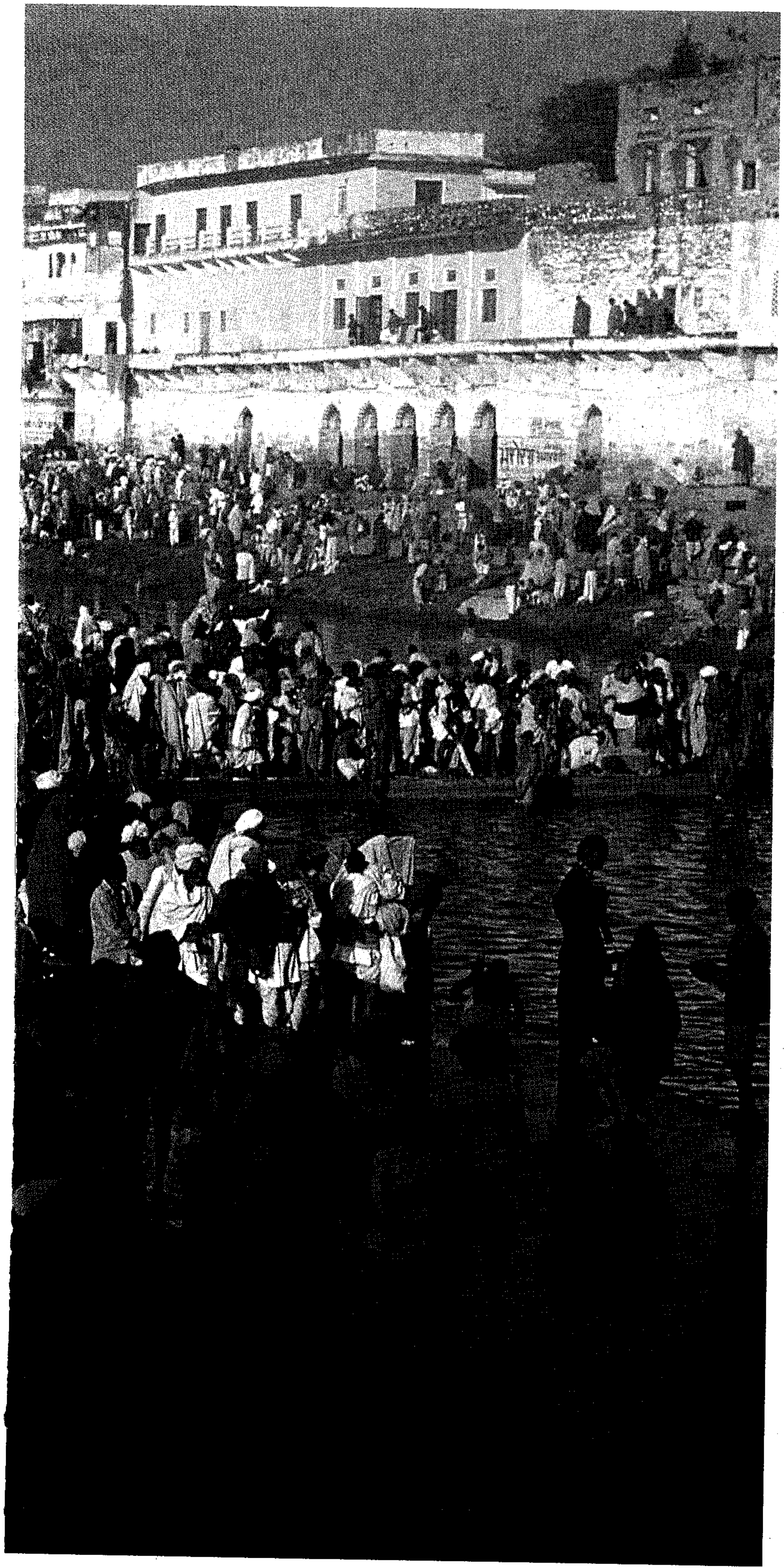
This extremely open attitude toward the outside, however, has—so far, at least—in no way lessened the country's intense religiosity. To a remarkable degree, Indians have adapted new technology to their own traditional purposes. When Indian television broadcast a movie version of the Ramayana, many Indian families moved their sets up onto their household altars and worshipped before them. Some observers might be scandalized by this, but these people were not worshipping the television; they were worshipping their gods. In Varanasi, on the night celebrating the wedding anniversary of the gods Shiva and Parvati, I saw numerous shrines to Shiva elaborately decorated with flashing electric lights, pulsing to the beat of Indi-pop disco music. To Western eyes, these shrines, built around an ancient phallic symbol and decked out like entrances to Las Vegas night clubs, seemed sacrilegious and surreal, but ordinary Indians were clustered around them in devout worship, just as they would have been a generation or a millennium ago.

"I think in India this lion will be tamed!" Mishra said, with a delighted laugh, when I mentioned the disco shrine.

The mahant is also convinced that science and religion have to mesh if the Ganges is to be saved. The Western approach, based on fear of a possible ecological disaster, will not work, he said. "If you go to people who have a living relationship with Ganga and you say, 'Ganga is polluted, the water is dirty,' they will say, 'Stop saying that. Ganga is not polluted. You are abusing the river.' But if you say 'Ganga is our mother. Come and see what is being thrown on the body of



Hindu pilgrims bathing on the banks of the Ganges. Believers seek to have their ashes scattered in the river, and it is consid



ty to die in Varanasi, because your soul will travel straight to Heaven.

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your mother—sewage and filth. Should we tolerate sewage being smeared on the body of our mother?' you will get a very different reaction, and you can harness that energy."

One attraction of the Oswald pond system is that it seems to combine modern science with traditional Hindu ideas, relying mainly on the self-cleansing properties of nature. Indeed, there is a curious parallel between Oswald's descriptions of the self-sustaining ecology of a pond system and certain traditional Hindu beliefs about the fundamental nature of the universe. "All living organisms fit into one of three categories," Oswald explained to me. "Either they are producers, like algae and other plants that create oxygen, or they are consumers, like cows, which eat plants, or human beings, who eat plants and cows, or they are decomposers, like fungi, which dispose of things when they're dead." Hinduism, in its mythopoetic description of the universe, may have intuited something similar. Mishra told me, "There are three gods: Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the sustainer, and Shiva, the god who provides us happiness in this world, which is decaying every day."

When I pointed out the analogy to Mishra, he seemed fascinated. "What did Professor Oswald say when you mentioned this?" he asked. I told him that Oswald had replied, with humor, "I'll leave that to your literary imagination. If I go back to California talking about Lord Shiva, they'll put me in a straitjacket."

Mishra, however, sees no necessary contradiction between the mythological and the scientific. Indeed, the practice of harnessing the metaphors of Hindu mythology to create a new environmental ethos is common in India. Even secular magazines, like *India Today*, invoke Lord Krishna's love of the forest in writing about the need for protection against the denuding of the Indian landscape. "With the Clean the Ganges campaign," Mishra says, "a meaning has been given to my religious background and to my scientific background. If both these backgrounds were not there, probably I would not have done this." He concludes by saying, "Life is like a stream. One bank is the Vedas"—the earliest Hindu Sanskrit texts—"and the other bank is the contemporary world, which includes science and technology. If both banks are not firm, the water will scatter. If both banks are firm, the river will run its course." ♦

FICTION

JULIANA CLOTH

Deaths of a travelling salesman.

BY T. CORAGHESSAN BOYLE

SHE was just sixteen, and still under her mother's wing, when William Wamala first came to town with his bright bolts of cloth. He was a trader from the North, and he'd come across the vast gray plane of the lake so early in the morning he was like a ghost rising from the mist. Picture him there, out on the lake, the cylinders of rich cotton batik hanging limp over the prow of the invisible boat as if suspended in ether, no movement discernible but for the distant dip and rise of his arms, and all the birds crying out, startled, while the naked statue of his torso levitated above the still and glassy surface. The fishermen were the first to see him coming. They were the eyes of the village, just as the dogs were its nose, and as they cast their nets for *dagaa* they raised their palms in silent greeting.

Miriam—she was the only child of Ann Namirimu and the late Joseph Namirimu, who had been struck by lightning and scorched out of this existence when she was an infant strapped to her mother's back—was at first unaware that the trader had arrived in town with a new season's patterns. She was asleep at such an hour, crushed under the weight of her sixteen years and the disco dance she'd attended the night before with her Aunt Abusaga and Uncle Milton Metembe. Uncle Milton's special friend, Gladys Makuma, had been there, and he danced with her all night while Aunt Abusaga danced with Miriam and a mural of boys and men painted themselves to the walls, alive only in their eyes. People were smoking and drinking beer and whiskey. The music thumped with a percussive bass, and the beat held steady except in those intervals when the electricity faltered and people fell laughing into each other's arms. It was like Heaven, a picture-book Heaven, and Miriam, asleep, lived only to go back there and dance till her feet got so heavy she couldn't lift them.

Coffee woke her. And griddle cakes. And the crowing of fugitive cocks. Her mother, richly draped in last year's *kanga* and exuding a smell of warm sheets and butter, was fixing breakfast preparatory to her departure to the government office where she worked as a secretary. Miriam got up, and her dog got up with her. She ate with her mother in silence, sitting at the polished wooden table as if she were chained to it.

When her mother had left for work, Miriam dug a pack of cigarettes from an innocent-looking fold of her bedclothes and stuck one experimentally in the corner of her mouth. They were Top Club cigarettes ("For Men Whose Decisions Are Final") and they'd been slipped into her hand at the disco dance, right there in the middle of the floor, while she was rolling her hips and cranking her shoulders in synch with the beat. And who had slipped them to her, unlooked for and unasked for, as a kind of tribute? A boy she'd known all her life, James Kariango, who was eighteen years old and as tall and wide-shouldered as any man. She felt a hand touch hers as everyone moved in a blur of limbs through sweat that was like a wall, the fumes of whiskey rose from the makeshift bar, and the shadowy blue clouds of smoke hung like curtains around imaginary windows, and there he was, dancing with a woman she'd never seen before and eclipsing his left eye in a sly wink.

She had never smoked a cigarette. Her mother wouldn't allow it. Cigarettes were for common people, and Ann Namirimu was no common person—educated in the capital and sister to one of the president's top advisers—and neither was her daughter. Her daughter was a lady, one of only eight girls in the village to go on to high school, and she would conduct herself like a lady at all times or suffer the rolling thunder and sudden strikes of her mother's wrath, and, while Aunt Abusaga and Uncle Milton Metembe might have thought a disco dance appropriate for a young lady, Ann Namirimu certainly did not, and it was against her better judgment that Miriam had been allowed to go at all. Still, once Miriam had stuck the cigarette in her mouth and studied herself in the mirror from various angles, she couldn't help putting a match to the tip of it and letting the sweet stinging smoke invade her mouth and swell out her cheeks until she exhaled like a veteran. She never took the smoke into her lungs, and she didn't really like the taste of it, but she smoked the cigarette down to a nub, watching herself in the mirror all the while, and then she went out into the yard and carefully buried the remnant where her mother wouldn't find it.

She fed her dog, swept the mats, and dressed for school in a dream oriented around the pulse of disco music and the movement of liberated bodies. Then she went off to school, barefoot, carrying her shoes in one hand and her satchel of books and papers in the other, thinking she might just have a peek at the market on her way.

It was early still, the sun long in the trees and all the striped and spotted dogs of the town stretching and yawning in the street, but it might as well have been noon in the marketplace. Everyone was there. Farmwives with their yams and tomatoes arranged in baskets and laid out on straw mats, a man selling smoked colobus monkey and *pangas* honed to a killing edge, the fishermen with their fresh-caught tilapia and tiger fish, the game and cattle butchers and the convocation of flies that had gathered to taste the wet sweetness

ANDERS WENNINGREN

of the carcasses dangling from metal hooks. And the crafts merchants, too—the women selling bright orange and yellow plastic bowls, pottery, mats and rugs and cloth. Cloth especially. And that was where Miriam found him, William Wamala, the smiling, handsome, persuasive young man and budding entrepreneur from the North, and his fine print cotton cloth, his Juliana cloth.

For that was what they christened it that morning, the crowd gathered around his stall that was nothing more than a rickety table set up at the far end of the marketplace where no one bothered about anything: Juliana cloth. William Wamala stood behind the table with his measuring tape and shears and the bolts of cloth in a blue so deep you fell into it, with slashes of pale papaya and bright arterial red for contrast. "How much for the Juliana cloth?" one woman asked, and they all knew the name was right as soon as she'd pronounced it. Because this print, unlike any they'd seen before, didn't feature flowers or birds or palm fronds or the geometric patterns that had become so popular in the last few years but a name—a name in English, a big, bold name spelled out in the aforementioned colors that ran in crazy zigzags all over the deep-blue field. "Juliana," it read. "Juliana, Juliana, Juliana."

Miriam wanted the cloth as soon as she saw it. Everyone wanted it. Everyone wanted to be the first to appear in the streets or at the disco dance in a *kanga* cut from this scintillating and enticing cloth. But it was expensive. Very expensive. And exclusive to William Wamala. Who proved ultimately to be a very understanding and affectionate young man, willing to barter and trade if shillings were unavailable, accepting pots of honey, dried *dagaa*, beer, whiskey, and cigarettes in payment, and especially, when it came to the beauties of the town, exchanging his Juliana cloth for what might be considered their most precious commodity, a commodity that cost them nothing but pleasure in the trading.

When Miriam stopped in the market two mornings later, he was there still, but the crowd around him was smaller and the bolts of cloth much depleted. He sat back now in a new cane chair, his splayed feet crossed at the ankles and looming large over the scrap-strewn table, his smile a bit haggard, a beer pressed like a jewel to his lips. "Hello, Little Miss," he crooned in a booming basso when he saw her standing there with her satchel between two fat-armed women wrapped in *kangas* that were as ancient as dust and not much prettier.

She looked him in the eye. There was nothing to be afraid of: Beryl Obote, fifteen and resplendent in Juliana cloth, had told her all about him, how he hummed and sang while removing a girl's clothes and how insatiable he was, as if that very day were his last on earth. "Hello," Miriam said, smiling widely. "I was just wondering how much the Juliana cloth is today?"

"For you?" He never even bothered to remove his feet from the table, and she could see the faintest glimmer of interest rising from the deeps of his eyes like a lonely fish, only to sink back down again into the murk. He was satiated, bloated with drink and drugs and rich food, rubbed so raw between his legs he could scarcely walk, and she was no beauty, she knew that. She made her eyes big. She held her breath. Finally, while the fat-armed women bickered over something in thin piping voices and the sun vaulted through the trees to take hold of her face, he quoted her a price. In shillings.

THE first to fall ill was Gladys Makuma, Uncle Milton Metembe's special friend. It was during the long rains in April, and many people were sick with one thing or another, and no one thought much about it at first. "Let her rest," Miriam's mother insisted from her long slab of an aristocrat's face. "Give her tea with lemon and honey and an herbal broth in the evenings, and she'll soon be on her feet again." But Miriam's mother was wrong.

Miriam went with Aunt Abusaga and Uncle Milton to Gladys Makuma's neat mud and clapboard house to bring her beef tea and what comfort they could, and when they stepped into the yard there was Lucy Mawenzi, doyenne of the local healers, coming gray and shaken through the door. Inside was a wake, though Gladys Makuma wasn't dead yet. Surrounded by her children, her husband, and his stone-faced sisters, she had shrunk into herself like some artifact in the dirt. All you could see of her face was nostrils and teeth, no flesh but the flesh of a mummy, and her hands on the sheets like claws. There would be no more disco-dancing for her, no more sharing a pint of whiskey with Uncle Milton Metembe in a dark boat on the dark, pitching lake. Even an optimist could see that, and Miriam was an optimist—her mother insisted on it.

With Beryl Obote, it was even worse, because Beryl was her coeval, a girl with skinny legs and saucer eyes who wore her hair untamed and had a laugh so infectious she could bring chaos to a classroom merely by opening her mouth. Miriam was coming back from the market one afternoon, the streets a soup of mud and an army of beetles crawling over every fixed surface, when she spotted Beryl in the crowd ahead of her, the Juliana cloth like the ocean come to life and her hair a dark storm brooding over it. But something was wrong. She was lurching from side to side, taking little circumscribed steps, and people were making way for her as if she were drunk. She wasn't drunk, though when she fell to the ground, subsiding into the mud as if her legs had dissolved beneath her, Miriam saw that her eyes were as red as any drunkard's. Miriam tried to help her up—never mind the yellow tub of *matoke*, rice, and beans her mother had sent her for—but Beryl couldn't find her feet, and there was a terrible smell about her. "I'm so embarrassed," she said, and if you couldn't smell it you could see it, the diarrhea and the blood seeping through the deep blue cloth into the fetid trodden mud.

After that everyone fell sick: the women who'd bought the Juliana cloth with their favors, their husbands, and their husbands' special friends, not to mention all the men who had consorted with a certain barmaid at the disco—the one who wore a *kanga* in the blue, red, and papaya of decay. It was a hex, that was what people believed at first, a spell put on them by William Wamala, who had come all the way across the lake from the homeland of their ancestral enemies—he was a sorcerer, a practitioner of the black arts, an evil spirit in the guise of a handsome and affectionate young man. But it soon became apparent that no hex, no matter how potent and far-reaching, could affect so

"I'm taking you off medicinal marijuana and putting you on medicinal harder stuff."

• •

many. No, this was a disease, one among a host of diseases in a region surfeited with them, and it seemed only natural that they call it Juliana's disease, after the cloth that had brought it to them.

Typically, it began with a headache and chills; then there was the loosening of the bowels and the progressive wasting. It could have been malaria or tuberculosis or marasmus, but it wasn't. It was something new. Something no one had ever seen before, and all who caught it—women and men in their prime, girls like Beryl Obote—were eventually wrapped up in bark cloth and sent to the grave before the breath of two months' time had been exhausted.

Uncle Milton Metembe and Aunt Abusaga contracted it at the same time, almost to the day, and Miriam moved into their house to tend them, afraid in her heart that the taint would spread to her. She cooked them soup and rice through the reek of their excrement, which flowed like stained water; she swept the house and changed their soiled sheets and read to them from the comic papers and the Bible. At night, the rats rustled in the thatch, and the things of the dark raised their voices in an unholy howl, and Miriam fell away deep into herself and listened to her aunt and uncle's tortured breathing.

The doctors came then from America, France, and England, white people in white coats, and a few who were almost white and even stranger for that, as if they'd been incompletely dipped into the milk of white life. They drew blood like vampires, vial after vial, till the sick and weary trembled at the sight of them, and still there was no cause or cure in sight, the corpses mounting, the orphans wailing; then one day the doctors went away and the government made an announcement over the radio and in the newspapers. Juliana's disease, the government said, was something new indeed, very virulent and always fatal, and it was transmitted not through cloth or hexes but through sexual contact. Distribution of condoms was being made possible by immediate implementation in every town and village, through the strenuous efforts of the government, and every man and woman, every wife and girl and special friend, should be sure of them every time sexual union was achieved. There was no other way and no other hope, short of monkhood, spinsterhood, or abstinence.

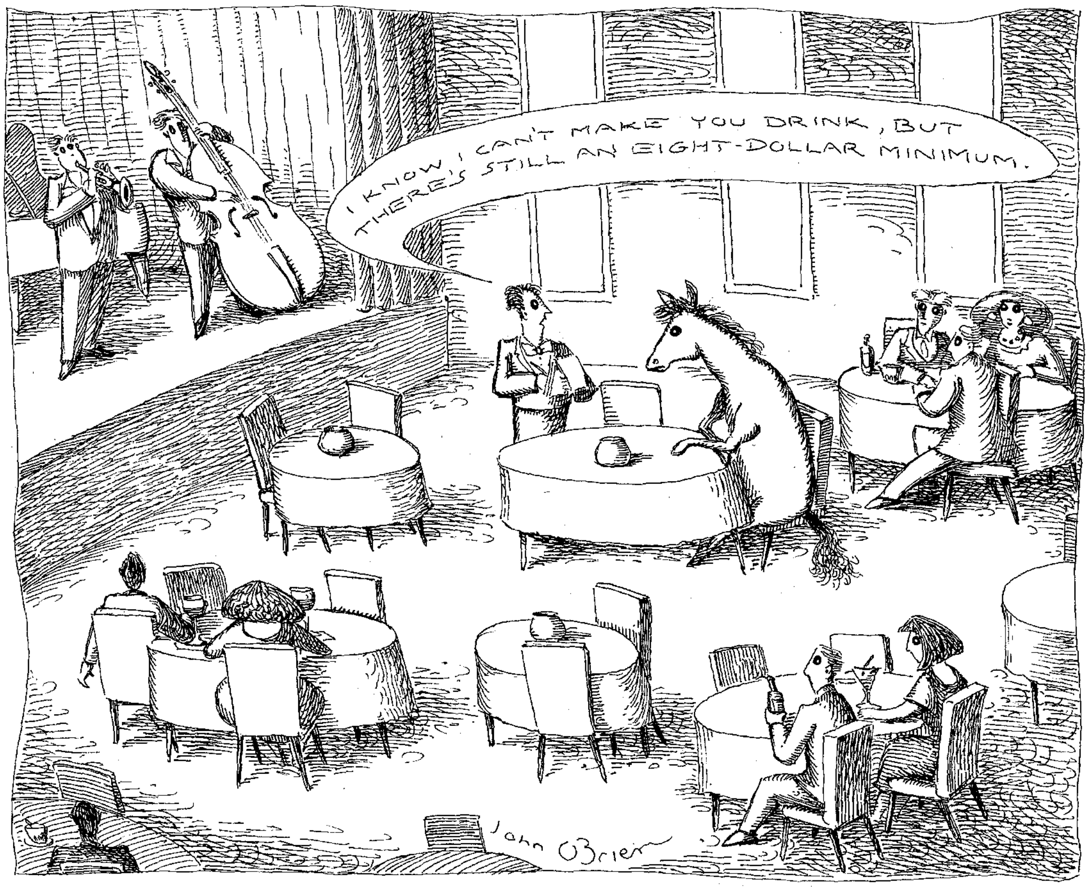
The news rocked the village. It was unthinkable. They were poor people who didn't have theatres or supermarkets or shiny big cars for diversion—they had only a plate of *dagaa*, a glass of beer, and sex, and every special friend had a special friend and there was no stopping it, even on pain of death. Besides which, the promised condoms never arrived, as if any true man or sensitive woman would allow a cold loop of latex rubber to come between them and pleasure in any event. People went on, almost defiantly, tempting fate, challenging it, unshakable in their conviction that though the whole world might wilt and die at their feet, they themselves would remain inviolate. The disco was as crowded as ever, the sales of beer and palm wine skyrocketed, and the corpses were shunted in a steady procession from sickbed to grave. Whatever else it might have been, it was a time of denial.

Miriam's mother was outraged. To her mind, the town's reaction was nothing short of suicidal. Through her position at the government office she had been put in charge of the local campaign for safe sex, and it was her job to disseminate the unwelcome news. Though the condoms remained forever only forthcoming because of logistical problems in the capital, Miriam's mother typed a sheet of warning and reproduced it a thousand times, and a facsimile of this original soon sagged damply from every tree and post and hoarding in town. "Love Carefully," it advised, and "Zero Grazing," a somewhat confusing command borrowed from one of the innumerable local agricultural campaigns. In fine print, it described the ravages of this very small and very dangerous thing, this virus (an entity for which there was no name in the local dialect), and what it was doing to the people of the village, the countryside, and even the capital. No one could have missed these ubiquitous sheets of warning and exhortation, and they would have had to be blind in any case to remain unaware of the plague in their midst. And deaf, too. Because the chorus of lament never ceased, day or night, and you could hear it from any corner of the village and even out in the mists of the lake—a thin, steady insectile wail broken only by the desperate beat of the disco.

"Suicide," Miriam's mother snarled over breakfast one morning, while Miriam, back now from her aunt and uncle's because there was no longer any reason to be there, tried to bury her eyes in her porridge. "Irresponsible, filthy behavior. You'd think everybody in town had gone mad." The day was still fresh, standing fully revealed in the lacy limbs of the yellow-bark acacia in the front yard. Miriam's dog looked up guiltily from the mat in the corner. Somewhere a cock crowed.

A long minute ticked by, punctuated by the scrape of spoon and bowl, and then her mother rose angrily from the table and slammed her cup into the wash-up tub. All her fury was directed at Miriam, as if fury alone could erect a wall between an adolescent girl and James Kariango of the nicotine-stained fingers. "No better than animals in the bush," she hissed, stamping across the floorboards with hunched shoulders and ricocheting eyes, talking to the walls, to the dense, mosquito-hung air, "and no shred of self-restraint or respect even."

Miriam wasn't listening. Her mother's rhetoric was as empty as a bucket in a dry well. What did *she* know? Sex to her mother was a memory. "That itch," she called it, as if it were something you caught from a poisonous leaf or a clump of nettles, but she never itched and as far as Miriam could see she'd as soon have a hyena in the house as a special friend. Miriam understood what her mother was telling her, she heard the fear seeping through the fierceness of that repetitive and concussive voice, and she knew how immortally lucky she was that William Wamala hadn't found her pretty enough to bother with. She understood all that and she was scared, the pleading eyes of Beryl Obote, Aunt Abusaga, Uncle Milton Metembe, and all the rest unsettling her dreams and quickening her pace through the market, but when James Kariango crept around back of the house fifteen minutes later and raised two yellowed fingers to his lips and whistled like an innocuous little bird, she was out the door before the sweat had time to sprout under her arms.

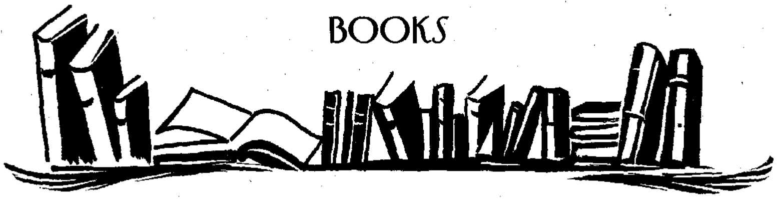

I KNOW I CAN'T MAKE YOU DRINK, BUT THERE'S STILL AN EIGHT-DOLLAR MINIMUM.
John O'Brien

The first time he'd come around, indestructible with his new shoulders, jaunty and confident and fingering a thin silver chain at his throat, Miriam's mother had chased him down the front steps at the point of a paring knife, cursing into the trees till every head in the neighborhood was turned and every ear attuned. Tending Aunt Abusaga and Uncle Milton Metembe had in its way been Miriam's penance for attracting such a boy—any boy—and she'd been safe there among the walking dead and the weight of their sorrows. But now she was home and the months had gone by and James Kariango, that perfect specimen, was irresistible.

Her mother had gone off to work. Her dog was asleep. The eyes of the world were turned to the market and the laundry and a hundred other things. It was very, very early, and the taste of James Kariango's lips was like the taste of the sweetest fruit, mango and papaya and the sweet dripping syrup of fresh-cut pineapple. She kissed him there, behind the house, where the flowers grew thick and the lizards scuttered through the dirt and held their tails high in sign of some fleeting triumph. And then, after a long while, every pore of her body opening up like a desert plant at the first hint of rain, she led him inside.

He was very solemn. Very gentle. Every touch was electric, his fingers plugged into some internal socket, his face glowing like the ball at the disco. She let him strip off her clothes and she watched in fear and anticipation as he stepped out of his shorts and revealed himself to her. The fear was real. It was palpable. It meant the whole world and all of life. But then he laid her down in the familiar cradle of her bed and hovered over her in all of his glory, and, oh, it felt so good. ♦

BOOKS



COMPANY MAN

Once Tom Peters redefined the American corporation. Now he wants to destroy it.

BY JAMES SUROWIECKI

IN 1974, the Motorola Corporation decided that it needed to get out of the television business. The plant where its TV sets were made was in every sense a failure: it lost money, it was full of unhappy workers (a third of them quit each year), and it turned out products that spent more time in repair shops than in people's homes. For every hundred television sets Motorola made, it found a hundred and forty defects. Seventy per cent of the people who bought TVs from Motorola filed complaints about how bad they were. And the company was spending a fortune on warranty service.

So Motorola sold the plant to the Japanese electronics giant Matsushita. Matsushita eliminated a third of the plant managers, turned supervisors into assembly-line workers, and gathered workers in teams each week to talk about improving production. Five years later, just seven per cent of customers complained, just one out of every hundred workers quit each year, and warranty costs plunged. The number of defects per hundred television sets? Six.

This is a story that was told and retold by American writers in the early eighties, because it seemed to say everything about the disaster that had hit American corporations in the previous decade. For twenty-five years after the Second World War, corporations here reaped the benefits of American hegemony over the global marketplace. But uncontested domination turned out to be poor preparation for real competition. By the early seventies, Japanese and West German companies were introducing better products faster, and were paying much more attention to what consumers really wanted. American corporations, by contrast, found themselves stuck with elaborate managerial hierarchies that were geared mostly toward producing thick reports, while twenty-five years of selling to captive customers had made corporations scornful of consumer desires and unconcerned about quality. The nineteen-seventies saw corporate profits, market share, and productivity growth go into free fall. By the end of the decade, both Chrysler and Lockheed had to be bailed out by the government, and Ford looked as if it might be next.

"In Search of Excellence" arrived upon this desolate scene like a Candygram at an intensive-care unit. The book cheerfully sorted through the rubble of American industry to pluck out those companies which were still doing things right, and then tried to explain what was right about what they were doing. Published in 1982, "In Search of Excellence," which Tom Peters wrote with Bob Waterman, became the most important business book of the decade. It sold more than four million copies, spent half a year at the top of the *Times* nonfiction list, and may well have played a major role in putting the pieces of American industry back together. It also catapulted Peters, a former consultant at McKinsey with a Ph.D. in business from Stanford, into a career as a management guru. Peters, whose seventh and latest book, "The Circle of Innovation" (Knopf; $30), is a picture-text hybrid reminiscent of the late work of Marshall McLuhan, has become a figure easy to lampoon, given to posing for book covers in boxer shorts while offering up plans to destroy the corporation as an entity. And yet his work over the last decade and a half has both shaped and been shaped by the most significant trends in American business. In no small part, what American corporations have become is what Peters has encouraged them to be.

In the late seventies, when Peters began writing, inflation and interest rates had skyrocketed. Labor unions were relatively strong, and foreign competition was more intense than it had ever been. And yet nearly everyone who looked at the crisis of American business understood it to be a crisis of management. We were, in an often repeated formula, "managing our way to economic decline." Under the imperative to diversify, corporations had become a grab bag of holdings, with Mobil Oil going into the department-store business and Exxon going into telecommunications. Management hierarchies had become hugely overstaffed: by 1980, there were more than fifteen levels separating the chairman of Ford from a factory-floor supervisor. (At Toyota, there were just five.) Workers had become apathetic, feeling little loyalty to their companies and little engagement with their jobs.

These problems were intimately interconnected. Executives running a hundred different businesses were unlikely to know anything specific about any one of them, which made it important to have extra layers of people who did. And all those layers of middle managers needed to justify their existence, which made them uncomfortable with initiative from blue-collar workers. Finally, it was hard for those workers to care about their work when their bosses seemed to be mainly finance guys who wanted to buy companies, not build cars or TV sets.

If you were trying to fix America's dysfunctional corporations, Japan was an obvious place to look for ideas. But although the way Japanese car companies gathered workers in small groups to talk about quality improvements was a pretty good illustration of what worker involvement meant, the picture of Japanese workers singing company songs struck most Americans as vaguely creepy. One of the things that distinguished "In Search of Excellence" was that it focussed almost exclusively on American firms. "The findings from the excellent companies amount to an upbeat message," Peters and Waterman wrote. "There is good news from America." In other words, you did not need to imitate the Toyota Production System or have your workers take naps during their breaks in order to succeed. Homegrown models could be found at companies like Hewlett-Packard, Procter & Gamble, and 3M.

"In Search of Excellence" was also notable for the seeming simplicity of its advice. As Peters and Waterman

BLAKE
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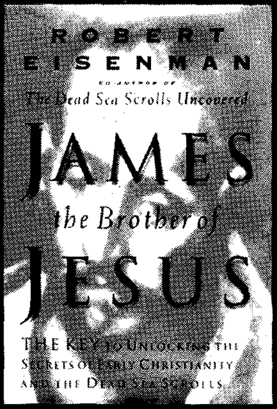
Who needs corporations? Peters asks. Why not assemble your talent like a film crew and disband when you're finished?

"What A Book!...Magnificent"
-Neil Asher Silberman


ROBERT EISENMAN
AUTHOR OF The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered
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THE KEY TO UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

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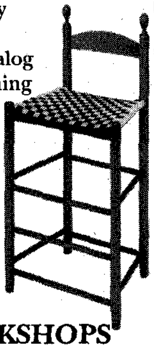

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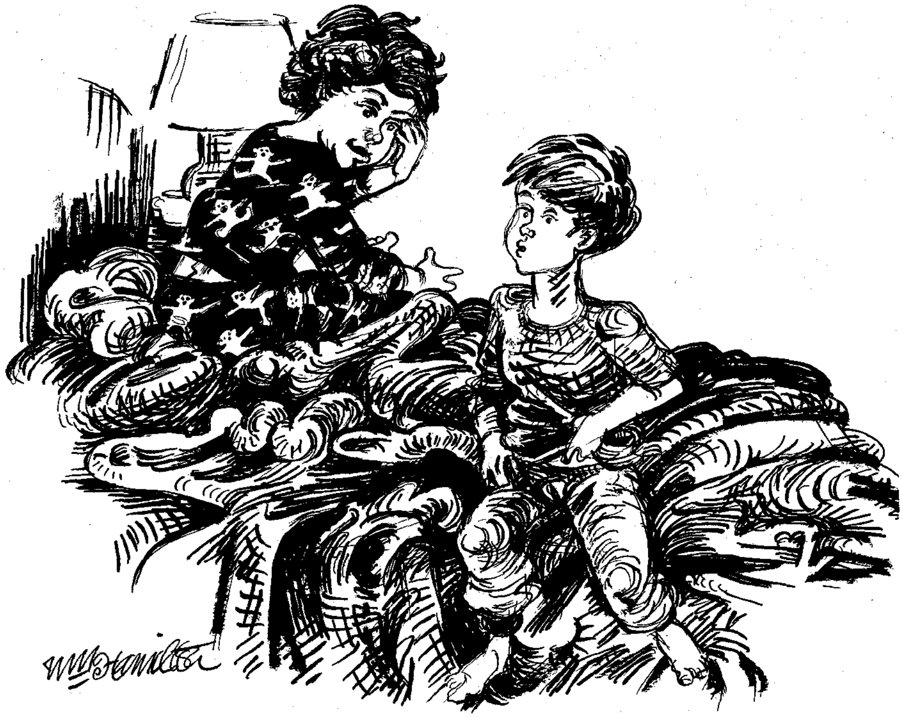
cautioned, many of their prescriptions might seem to be "motherhoods," or hortatory platitudes: "All business success rests on something labeled a sale, which at least momentarily weds company and customer." "Stick to your knitting." "The key ingredient is productivity through people, pure and simple." When Peters and Waterman counselled that business had to go "back to basics," they took their own words to heart.

Simplicity of language, though, shouldn't be confused with simple-mindedness. By spelling out what a sale was, Peters and Waterman wanted to emphasize the need for companies to be closer to their customers, which in turn meant that the companies had to eliminate layers of hierarchy and make sure that the people designing products and selling products had real authority. "Stick to your knitting" was a homespun but effective way of cautioning companies against diversification. And the notion of "productivity through people" pushed corporations to do everything possible to give front-line workers some measure of genuine independence.

The stories that Peters and Waterman tell illuminate these principles. At Frito-Lay, salesmen drove through blizzards to make sure that stores had all the product they needed. At Procter & Gamble, memos were restricted to one page. At Texas Instruments, a motto was "More than two objectives is no objectives." Johnson & Johnson had no planners at its corporate headquarters, and each product division determined its own future. 3M's executives focussed on manufacturing, because they had come to headquarters from manufacturing jobs and then rotated back out again. And the Dana Corporation threw away twenty-three inches of policy manuals, cut its layers of management in half, and eliminated time clocks for assembly-line workers. If it's hard to recapture the revelatory impact that these stories had in 1982, it's precisely because the principles they exemplify have become second nature at many American corporations.

A great deal of "In Search of Excellence" was devoted to the problem of what became known as "corporate culture," and this made the book too squishy for many executives. Peters and Waterman considered an engaged and motivated workforce essential for solving most other problems. Quality control, customer service, worker recruitment and training, decentralization—none of these could succeed unless you had a corporate culture in which workers could feel that they mattered. Accordingly, companies should try to foster a distinctive sense of corporate iden-



"I'm their real child, and you're just a frozen embryo thingy they bought from some laboratory."

tity, often through the construction of mythic narratives. Peters and Waterman describe, for instance, engineers at Hewlett-Packard telling stories about "Bill [Hewlett] and Dave [Packard]," even though none of them had ever met the company's founders. Similar stories were traded at Johnson & Johnson about the lengths employees would go to insure quality and at Frito-Lay about those legendary salesmen in the snow.

Beyond this creation of what you might call a micro-nationalism, though, Peters and Waterman urged that workers be given greater autonomy: the quickest route to improved productivity was getting workers to feel "ownership" of their job. Here the authors were explicitly reviving a tradition established by an industrial psychologist named Elton Mayo, who had made studies of workers at Western Electric's Hawthorne Works, in the nineteen-thirties. The most famous of these studies showed that workers' productivity rose when the factory lights were brightened and that their productivity also rose when the lights were dimmed. The attention paid to workers, it seemed, created what came to be known as a "Hawthorne effect." Peters and Waterman went further than this, though: they brought in a series of social-scientific research studies to demonstrate that the more individual control people had over their circumstances, the better they were likely to perform. In one study, two groups of people were assembled to solve puzzles and to proofread as loud noises occurred at random in the background. While the first group was left to its own devices, members of the second were given a button they could press to turn off the sound. The second group solved five times as many puzzles as the first and made markedly fewer proofreading errors, even though nobody in the group pressed the button. All the research cited by Peters and Waterman pointed to similar conclusions: it was crucial for workers to feel they had control over their environment as well as to have a sense of shared purpose.

Still, culture alone wouldn't do the trick, and the book's most important recommendations dealt with corporate organization. The chapter entitled "Stick to Your Knitting" made a powerful case against diversification and

(Advt.)

Old legends, new universes, and gritty urban realities are in the spotlight this week.

Lawrence Block has spent a large portion of his career viewing the dark and treacherous underside of New York City through the eyes of private investigator Matthew Scudder. These literary excursions have already won this author many accolades and prizes, including several Edgar Awards and the appellation Grand Master, bestowed upon him by the Mystery Writers of America. ***EVEN THE WICKED*** is Block's latest Matt Scudder novel, and it sets the protagonist on the trail of a vigilante serial killer who is roaming among the millions, freely executing those he feels society wishes dead. As in much of Block's previous work, the City itself is a well-defined major character in a mystery that is as provocative and cerebral as any in print.

Gregory Benford uses hard scientific fact to speculate about the future, and comes up with a unique fictional adventure of the soul, the spirit, and the mind. In his latest novel, ***COSM***, he constructs a basketball-size universe in a young physicist's laboratory, and then addresses the questions of destiny and responsibility, creation and godhood, and other profound ethical issues engendered by this unexpected new reality. There are few writers who can match Benford's ability to see our world as it is, down to the smallest particles, and then imagine what it might be tomorrow.

We move from the future to the past with **Donald S. Johnson**'s ***PHANTOM ISLANDS OF THE ATLANTIC***, a book that explores seven mythical lands that were conjured out of the dreams and fears of sailors, cartographers, and explorers, yet which actually appeared for centuries on maps and in journals. A compelling legacy of a bygone age, the dark origins and strange cartographic histories of these islands that never were are revealed by author Johnson, and brought to palpable life through a bounty of tales, facts, engravings, and illustrations.

We'll talk again.

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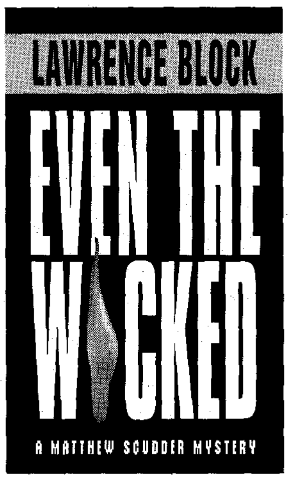

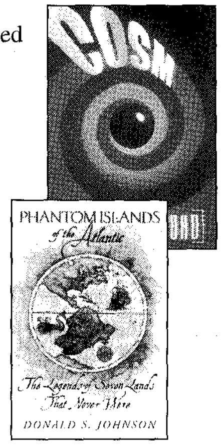
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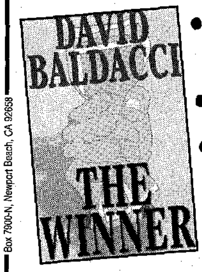
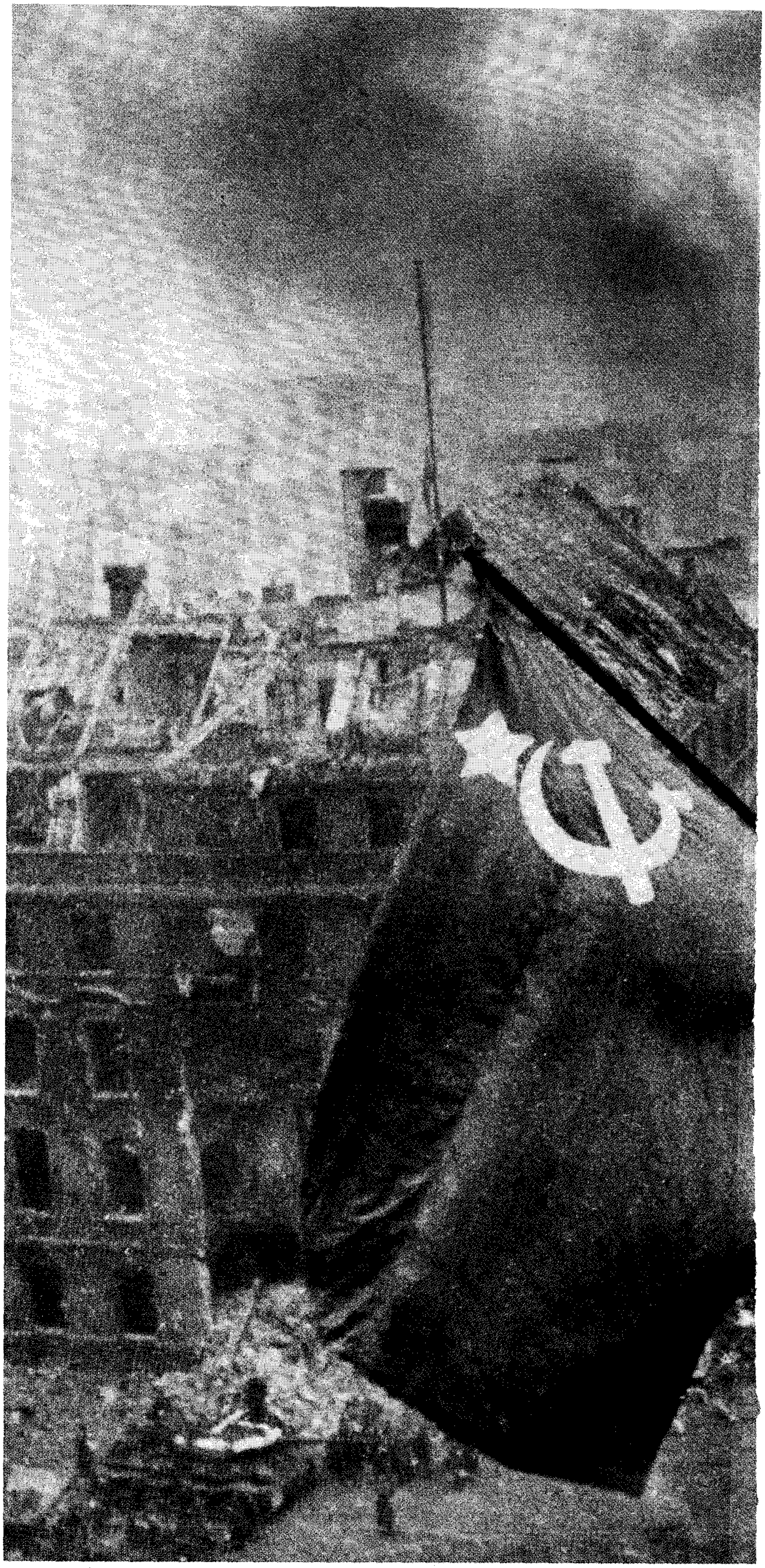


for "core competence." That flouted the received wisdom in the nineteen-seventies, when companies believed that the best way to deal with risk was to diversify into as many industries as possible. If the oil industry had a down year, you'd be saved by the good year in telecommunications, and vice versa. Peters and Waterman insisted that sticking to a core competence was vital to the success of the companies they studied. "Core competence" did not mean making just one product; it meant emphasizing one skill. Sony miniaturized. Fluor built. And John Deere served farmers. Today, the notion that a company does best when it does one thing is the new received wisdom.

Similarly, under the banner "Simple Form, Lean Staff" Peters and Waterman laid the groundwork for the tightly focussed, lean (all right, downsized)

MAKING HISTORY

Although by 1945, when he was twenty-eight, Yevgeny Khaldei had become a celebrated Soviet war photographer, he has only recently been compared to such world-renowned photojournalists as Dmitri Baltermants and Robert Capa. His first American show, in 1995, was followed quickly by two major museum exhibitions, and last fall Aperture published "Witness to History," a collection of his photographs; he died in October, at the age of eighty. Khaldei's eye was drawn as much to the incongruous aspects of war as to its glories and horrors. (After the liberation of Sevastopol, he caught sunbathers reclining amid the rubble.) In 1945, he journeyed with the Eighth Army to Berlin. The Reichstag fell on May 2nd, and the photographer was there, on the roof of the burning building, with a homemade Soviet flag; after handing it to some soldiers, he took several pictures of the historic scene. "This is what I was waiting for for fourteen hundred days," he said later. "It was scary, but I was euphoric, so I didn't notice." A show of Khaldei's work is currently on view at the Schickler gallery, in SoHo.



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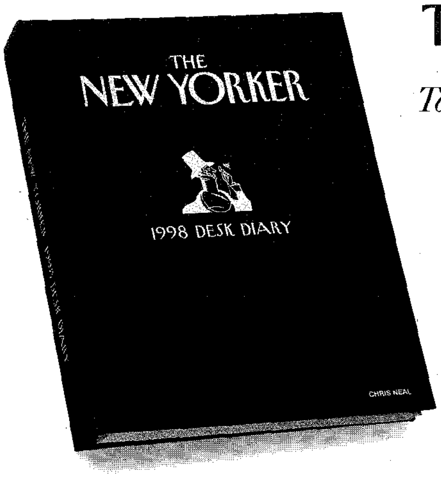
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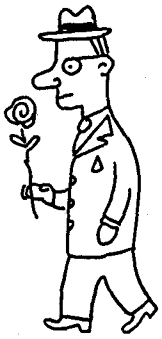
corporation of the nineteen-nineties. They wanted to get rid of the multiple layers of management which seemed to serve no purpose other than to insure that the people above were insulated from the people below. The book reprinted a chart from an unnamed corporation which showed all the different paths that a single idea for a new product would have to take in order to become a reality: there were two hundred and twenty-three such paths. In the decade and a half since, most of those paths have been eliminated. While American corporations remain at heart institutions run by managers, there are many fewer of those managers, and the ones who remain have more responsibility than they once did. In that sense, downsizing is a direct consequence of "pushing authority far down the line."



Peters's career since "In Search of Excellence" can be seen as a carrying out of these prescriptions—worker autonomy, core competence, and lean production—to their logical, if perhaps absurd, conclusions. In 1987, Peters published "Thriving on Chaos." Despite its title, the book represents his one real attempt to think systematically about the way corporations can remain structurally coherent while still pushing responsibility and power outward, to front-line workers. It offers a sophisticated portrait of the American corporation as it has evolved toward so-called flatter hierarchies, in which there are fewer managers but each one is in charge of more people. Peters also commended the use of small production teams that brought together people with different skills from different divisions. When Ford made the Taurus sedan, for instance, it created Team Taurus, an independent group in which designers, engineers, and assembly-line people worked together simultaneously to produce the car. Traditionally, United States auto companies produced cars one stage at a time. The chairman of General Motors once described the process by saying, "Guys in [design] would draw up a body and send the blueprint over and tell the guy, 'O.K., you build it if you can, you S.O.B.' And the guy at [assembly] would say, 'Well, Jesus, there's no damn way you can stamp metal like that and there's no way we can weld this stuff together.'"

At the time of "Thriving on Chaos," Peters still believed that American corporations could be reformed, and that managers could still serve a useful function. He doesn't believe that anymore. The short answer to why he doesn't is that, having read some books on quantum mechanics and some postmodern fiction, he decided that permanence was an illusion and that fashion should be the central animating idea of American business strategy. This meant that companies should emphasize rapid change over continuity, and that they should concentrate more on image than on organization. It also meant that the conventional corporation—with its longtime employees, fixed headquarters, and long-range production plans—was an anachronism, ill-suited to the virtual-reality economy of the nineteen-nineties. Thus "Liberation Management" (1992) insists on "the 'entertainizing' of everything" while "The Tom Peters Seminar" (1994) includes this kernel of wisdom: "If you can touch it, it's not real." And it came as little surprise when Peters titled his next book "The Pursuit of WOW!"

The longer answer sheds a great deal of light on the direction that American business has taken during the last decade. Sometime between "Thriving on Chaos" and "Liberation Management," Peters fell in love with the market. Previously, he had downplayed the role of financial incentives and encouraged corporations to build "intrinsic motivations" into workers by creating distinct and coherent corporate cultures. As "The Circle of Innovation" shows, he has discarded these vestiges of managerialism. If you want efficiency and quality, you need markets within the corporation as much you need them outside it.

THE paradox of the traditional corporation, after all, is that externally it competes in the free market but internally it's centrally planned. If you want to design a new car, for instance, you don't put the project up for bids by different outside teams to find out which one will give you the best price. Instead, you pick your team from among

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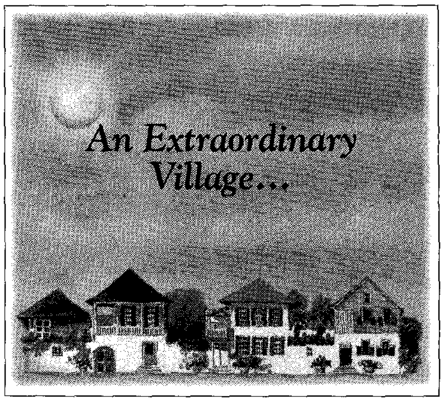
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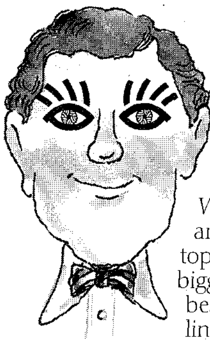

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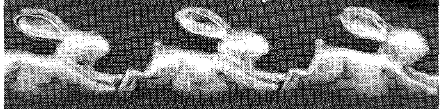

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your employees and let it design the car. Similarly, if you need an engine repaired you don't shop around for the best deal. You call your maintenance man and tell him to repair it. Because the maintenance man works for your corporation, it's quicker and easier to have him do it. You trust him to do a good job for his employer, and he trusts you not to make him bargain for a job every time a need arises.

There are limits, though, to what a corporation does for itself. Microsoft can have its own staff of janitors to clean its buildings or it can contract with a cleaning service for that job. Intel can use its own people to keep the lawn outside its corporate headquarters mowed or it can contract with landscapers to do so. These are all mundane tasks, but the truth is that there's no obvious line separating a corporation's essential tasks from those it can farm out. If subcontracting landscaping is O.K., why isn't subcontracting accounting? And, if subcontracting accounting is O.K., why isn't subcontracting design? There's no point at which it suddenly becomes clear that if you go any further the corporation won't exist anymore. If anything, the experience of a company like Nike, which subcontracts nearly all its manufacturing, suggests that that point can't be reached until you take an eraser to the name. The only things Nike has to have to be Nike are the name and the swoosh. And maybe Michael.

The proper corporate balance between inside and outside has been the subject of considerable debate ever since Henry Ford's dream of a perfect vertically integrated corporation disappeared. An entire school of economics, called "transaction cost" economics, concerns itself with just this question. For Peters, though, the debate is over. In his view, markets produce the best outcome—the best in price, the best in quality. The need to compete and the ability to specialize mean that subcontractors can do whatever a company wants done better than the company itself could. And the transparency of markets in this new information age means that any subcontractor who tries to double-deal or haggle will be punished immediately. "Subcontracting most anything and at least a substantial part of everything" becomes the new corporate recipe. The organization is, as they say, hollowed out. This is the path that Sara Lee trod when it announced last September that it would be divesting itself of manufacturing plants in order to concentrate on selling its brand.

There are good reasons to subcontract; for one thing, a company specializing in landscaping is probably very good at it. But there can also be good reasons not to subcontract. It may well be harder to keep the loyalty of your remaining workers as they see their colleagues replaced by people wearing Accountants R Us buttons. And it's not clear, in any case, at what point the regression ends. Does Accountants R Us do its own data processing? Or is that outsourced, too? More important, doing work in-house keeps you from having to argue with suppliers over price, lets you keep a tight rein on quality, and gives you control over production. Peters exaggerates the perfection of the market in that respect. General Motors outsourced the production of the bodies of its cars until it grew tired of its suppliers' constant attempts to hold up production in exchange for a better price. Nike keeps insisting that it wants its factories to pay the minimum wage and not employ children, but, since it doesn't actually run the factories, it can only cajole and threaten; it can't just do it.

In the end, the real question is: Why have corporations in the first place? Why not make things the way independent films get made? That is, someone writes a script, someone agrees to direct, they get financing, choose actors and a production crew, make the film, get someone to distribute it, and then all those involved disband, perhaps never to see one another again. This is a model that Peters himself offers. Don't worry about being loyal to a corporation that isn't going to be loyal to you, he adjures in "The Circle of Innovation." Instead, your real project is "the creation—and maintenance—of a BRAND CALLED YOU."

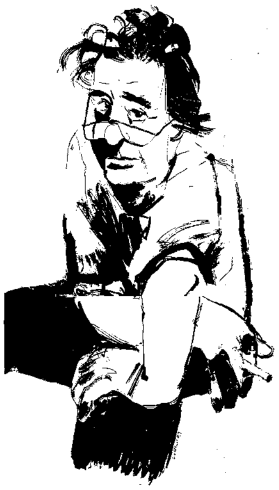
Now, one problem with this is that people don't necessarily want to sell themselves all the time. When the brand is you, you never get a vacation. And, when it comes to having something remarkable to sell, Peters sounds overoptimistic in declaring that everyone can become a figure of "towering competence." By contrast, the corporation allows people not to worry about where their next meal is coming from or whether they're going to be able to pay their kids' school bills.

These days, the products that Peters writes about are almost all ephemeral. But, while people can make a film or write a book the "networked" way, it's hard to see how to make cars or semiconductor chips by that process. And that's the bigger problem with Peters's circles of innovation. Who invests in the production line? Who trains the people who run it? Nostalgia for the Fordist assembly line or for the desk job Jack Lemmon had in "The Apartment" is obviously misplaced. But today's well-run corporation takes the efforts of ordinary people and leverages them into something that the virtual organization cannot match. Motorola, which once couldn't make a TV set that worked, has reinvented itself as a global leader in manufacturing quality while employing more than a hundred thousand workers. What postmodern business visionaries tend to forget is that the corporation is actually a remarkably good model for bringing people together to make things in great quantities. Not the corporation with twenty layers of managers but the corporation with—yes—flatter hierarchies, with experienced and multiskilled workers, and with managers who have a real understanding of what a successful and flexible production line looks like. The corporation, in other words, that Peters helped create. ♦

BARNEY LOOKS BACK

A humorous novel about growing old.

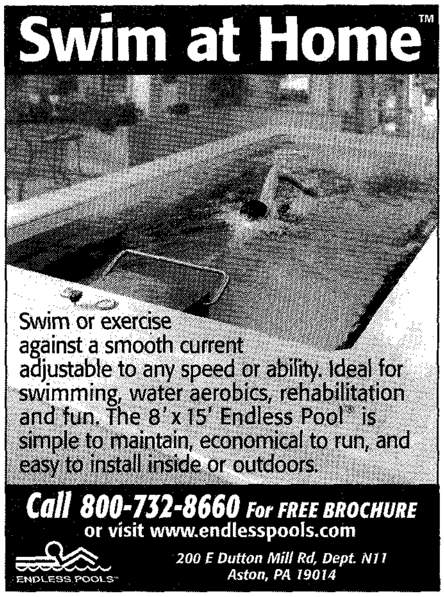
BY JOHN UPDIKE



Mordecai Richler

Now that novelists, like everyone else, live longer, we can expect more geriatric novels. Hitherto, the elderly have received relatively short shrift in the dispensations of fiction; your typical romantic heroine is in her twenties, and a viable hero may be as old as forty, though even his few gray hairs make us—as they would with the hero of a pornographic film—a bit uneasy. Novels are about mating, and the elderly need not apply. But apply they will, henceforth, in all the vigor that modern medicine allows, bursting with regrets and anecdotes and the wisdom of the long view, while pressing upon us videos of old pornographic films in which they once starred. By the demographics of it, the middle of our century now comes in for intense retrospective attention; of Philip Roth's last two novels, for instance, "Sabbath's Theater" revives with a passionate fullness a boy's impressions of the Second World War and thirties swing, and "American Pastoral" extends the effort of resurrection to virtually the entire industrial Newark of the aging narrator's youth. Don DeLillo, a mere sixty-one, is too young to be geriatric, but he begins the massive unearthing of "Underworld" with a fifty-page reconstruction of a baseball game played at the Polo Grounds on October 3, 1951. The fifties, indeed, are getting more literary respect this time around than when they were occurring.

Barney Panofsky, the animated, only occasionally forgetful narrator of Mordecai Richler's "Barney's Version" (Knopf; $25), takes as the point of departure for his belated memoirs the Paris of the early fifties, where he and a number of other young Canadians and Americans were making their first



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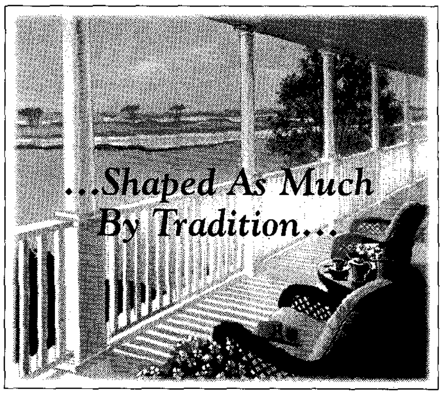

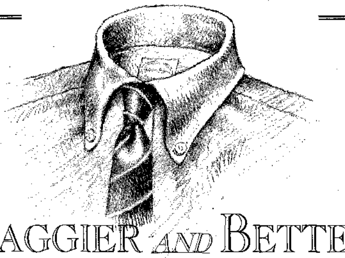

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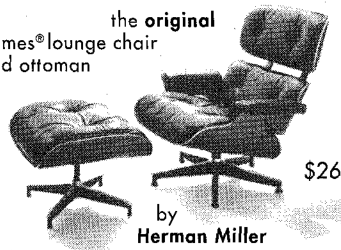

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runs at art and fame. More than four decades later, a companion of the time and a fellow-Montrealer of Barney's, the esteemed but contemptible novelist Terry McIver, is publishing his memoirs, and the inaccuracies have goaded Barney to set down, in arresting fits and starts, "the true story of my wasted life." Wasted? In fact, Barney has made a fortune as the founder and head of Totally Unnecessary Productions, which produces commercials and serial schlock for television. Twenty-two in 1950, he is three years older than Richler—a kind of scapegrace elder brother. A loyal acquaintance of Barney's, Irv Nussbaum, sums him up as "one of your real wild Jews. A *bonditt.* A *mazik.* A devil."

Richler has always been what the Psalmist calls "a ready writer," but much of his writing has been done for films, and the rest lies for most Americans over the horizon that coincides with the Canadian border. For those who, like me, have some catching up to do, "Barney's Version" is a propitious place to begin—a rollicking novel laden with rue, a self-portrait of a creative personality who never found a creative outlet that he could respect, a paean to the pleasures and perils of drink, a celebration of ice hockey and tap dancing, a lament for a multicultural Montreal now torn and depressed by Québécois separatism, a broad window into the bustle of Canadian Jewry, an intermittent disquisition on authorship, an extended meditation on the relations between the sexes, even a murder mystery, with an uproarious solution. Bernard (Boogie) Moscovitch was the most promising of the many aspiring literary lights in Barney's mid-century Paris, one to whom Barney, aspiring only to artistic company, attached himself with a loyalty unshaken by Boogie's addiction to drugs, drink, and mean putdowns. Even Boogie's sleeping with Barney's second wife, in a Laurentian lakeside cottage, sours but does not squelch their comradely drinking bout afterward. Boogie goes into the lake to clear his head, and disappears; Barney is charged with his murder and, though not convicted, is believed by many to be guilty. What happened to Boogie? This is the novel's underlying riddle, and might have served as its title. Well, what happened to Boogie you wouldn't believe.

The book is more cunningly plotted than its dishevelled surface (with numerous memory lapses and factual errors corrected in footnotes by Barney's meticulous older son) leads the reader to expect. All that matters in Barney's life eventually comes around for a reckoning. He divides his tale into three sections named after his three wives. The first, a faux-Wasp waif called Clara, he marries in Paris and soon leaves, driven away by her mad mixture of frigidity with him and promiscuity with others. Despairing of his return, she commits suicide, and eventually enjoys a Plath-like posthumous glory on the strength of sketches and poems that no one took seriously at the time.

The Second Mrs. Panofsky, never named, is met and wed back in Montreal in 1959, and this misbegotten marriage, wounded by Barney's falling in love with someone else at the wedding, generates the densest comedy and pathos of the novel. The Second Mrs. is a Jewish-Canadian princess from central casting, with self-important arriviste parents and a propensity to sustained prattle. Not since the late Stanley Elkin and the early Philip Roth have I seen a writer take such uninhibited delight in caricaturing Jewish types, from ghetto Yiddish speaker to superproper pseudo-Gentile, with all shapes of excessive energy in between. The Second Mrs. Panofsky is a gabby bore, yet Barney allows that she, like his old friend Hymie Mintzbaum, "possessed that quality I most admire in other people—an appetite for life." Cruelly neglected and spurned by her husband, she is not without her touching utterances: "Barney, I want you to give us a chance. I want you to tell me what I could do to make you happy." To which he replies, like many another emotionally absent husband, "ImhappyImhappy."

Barney's third marriage, the longest, to Miriam, the vision of grace whom he sighted at his second wedding, is yet the briefest and dimmest in the novel. Happiness, except in Tolstoy, doesn't bear much describing. What entertains and affects us in "Barney's Version" is the headlong, spendthrift passage of a life, redeemed from oblivion in the unbridled telling. The edge of the grave makes a lively point of vantage. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

A CERTAIN JUSTICE, by P. D. James (Knopf; $25). James's fourteenth book, and her bloodiest. In addition to the corpse célèbre—a London criminal lawyer found dead and bewigged in Chambers, drenched with blood not her own—these pages are littered with four grislier bodies, plus one murder recalled, one attempted, and two suicides. Although Inspector Dalgliesh does an elegant job of discovering the laws that govern this gyre of disaster, the author's customarily precise hand has wobbled here and produced a highbrow slasher.

AS THOUGH I HAD WINGS, by Chet Baker (St. Martin's; $16.95). The late West Coast trumpeter left this slim memoir behind, and it has much in common with his enigmatic playing. In his characteristically hushed voice, Baker tells the weird story of his Army days—when bored G.I.s drank Aqua Velva for kicks—and subsequent, jagged career: eating taquitos with Charlie Parker, landing in jail for heroin use, trying to outrun the tabloids. Despite all the drama, each chapter is like a sketch done at the beach on a perfect, drowsy day.

HUXLEY, by Adrian Desmond (Addison-Wesley; $37.50). This biography of evolution's great propagandist offers a panorama of nineteenth-century British history: an epoch of radical change both inside and outside the lab and the lecture hall. Desmond believes that scientific theories gain acceptance when they reflect the needs and desires of society, and presents Huxley as the voice of those who had been excluded from education and authority; he and his followers found British science a gentlemen's hobby and left it a profession open to all who qualified.

THE R. CRUMB COFFEE TABLE ART BOOK, edited by Peter Poplaski (Little, Brown; $40). From the self-deprecations of pop singers to the smirking asides of Hollywood's leading men, self-abasement has become a sort of Nehru jacket for the nineties—a one-size-fits-all badge of sensitivity with a slightly slimy subtext—but the cartoonist R. Crumb has picked at his scabs so obsessively as to deflect all suspicions of ulterior motives. This beautifully assembled catalogue raisonné shows us that good, old-fashioned self-loathing still has the power to shock.

THE PROFILE MAKERS, by Linda Bierds (Holt; $23). This visionary collection of poems contains a series of "takes" from the lives of pioneers in the history of simulacra—Muybridge, van Leeuwenhoek, an anonymous cave painter—and they demonstrate that it is through the disorientations of perception that we may best understand the fundamental strangeness of the world. The geographer in a painting by Vermeer, for example, hears the hiss of flooded cane fields being burned off outside his window and reflects upon William Harvey's new theory about the circulation of the blood—a capillary action paralleling that of cane plants—and the condition of his own frail heart.

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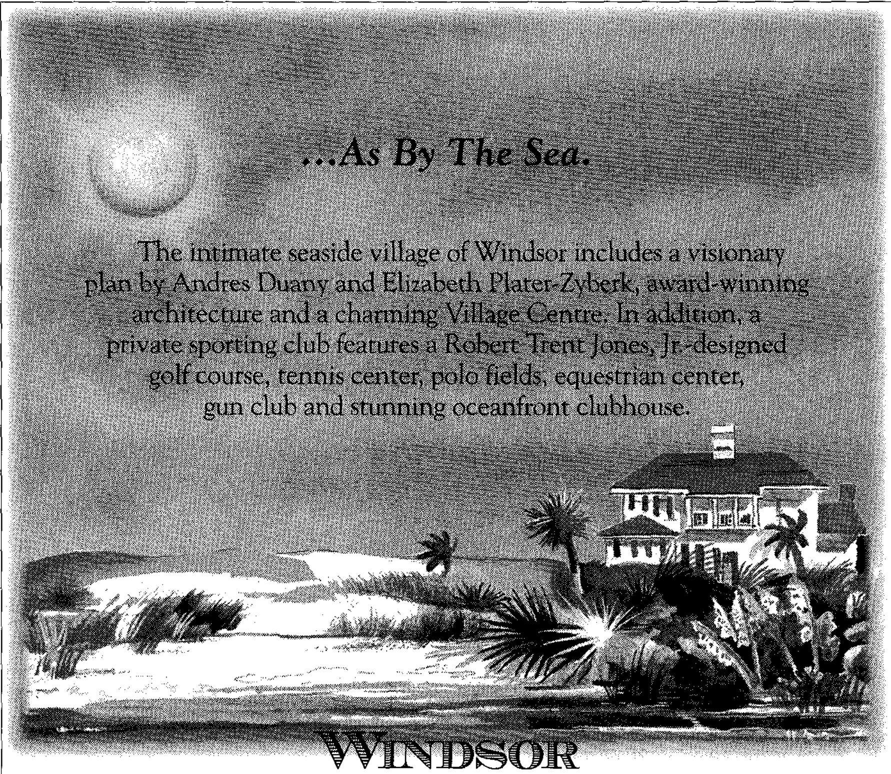

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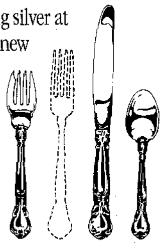

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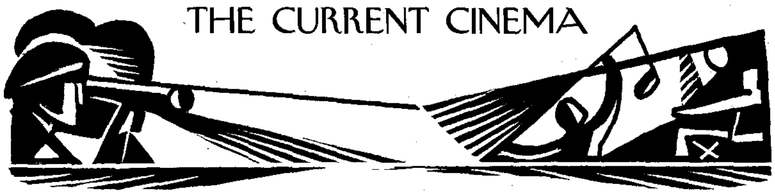
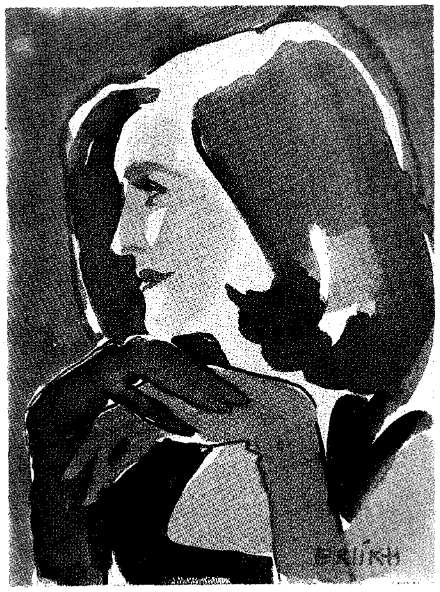


WHO'S STARRY NOW?

Why they glow and why we need them.

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

I ALWAYS wanted to look like Julie Christie, and that may be why, watching "Afterglow," I found it so hard to believe that any man in his right mind—even Nick Nolte, with his raffish Viking charm—would be out chasing skirt when she was waiting at home in bed. Abandoning Sharon Stone I could see: for all her edgy allure, she has about as much mystery as a manicurist. But Julie Christie? More than thirty years after setting the standard for a certain kind of contemporary beauty in John Schlesinger's "Darling," she looks undimmed by age: that neo-Roman arrangement of bones with an almost adamantine jawline, the generous smear of a mouth, the lucid blue-gray eyes, the poreless skin, and the sudden, flash-lit smile. When you combine all these with the curious reticence of her acting style—that deer-in-the-headlights quality—you have what is crudely called "star power." Like Garbo and Gary Cooper, for instance, Christie will always be larger than the roles she is called upon to play, and she has never seemed to loom in such glaring disproportion to her setting as she does in "Afterglow."



Julie Christie: Even a breakdown can't tarnish her lustre.

Written and directed by Alan Rudolph, the film makes shrewd misuse of the actress's readiness to mask her natural glamour. Christie plays an emotionally distant wife of a small-time handyman (Nolte) who dabbles big time in infidelity. She is a former B-movie actress who lolls the hours away in her bathrobe watching old movies of herself while her husband tools around Montreal in his red van fixing both the apartments and the love lives of his female clients. One of them is a fetching young thing (Lara Flynn Boyle) married to a caricature of a career-obsessed yuppie (Jonny Lee Miller); she hires Mr. Fix-It to convert a spare room into a nursery, in spite of the fact that she is childless and her husband is too fastidious to sleep with her. (I kept thinking there was some tantalizing issue about his sexuality, that he would eventually emerge from the closet, but instead he encounters Julie Christie drinking alone at the Ritz-Carlton and picks her up.) The two couples secretly swap partners, but whereas the yuppie wife acts like a bunny in heat around Nolte, her husband remains so intimidated by the Glamorous Older Woman that he fails to perform his manly duties when the two of them go off for a weekend in the country. These droll carryings on left me more puzzled than amused; Rudolph apparently couldn't make up his mind whether he was directing a Neil Simon comedy, a Pinteresque drama of disconnection, or a French farce.

In the final scene, Christie's coolly ironic diva person (Jackie O. sunglasses, turban-style scarf) gives way to a startling display of raw emotion. There is something eerily fascinating about watching this normally reserved actress expose herself as never before; she is last seen lying across the bed and wailing like a woman who has been stripped of her all defenses. But, since nothing in the movie's unpsychological storytelling has prepared us for this breakdown, the scene just feels weird. It's presumably intended as a statement about the anguished condition of present-day marriage, but it seems tacked on. Although the scene provides Christie with the occasion for a daring stylistic departure, the requirement of a marathon crying jag seems a violation of her essential modesty rather than a revelation of what she can do when she lets her hair down.

"Afterglow" is one of those movies in which people throw around inexplicably grand statements, which makes you wonder if you missed a crucial plot point while blinking. "My soul needs an overhaul," one of the characters says, and another admits, "As a matter of fact, I live up to the very edge of my charm." Rudolph writes very stylized dialogue, to go along with his elaborately stylized surfaces. (The yuppies' apartment fairly quivers with cunning postmodern detail.) Much of the time, the movie looks like a stage set for a musical; I wouldn't have been surprised to see Gene Kelly streak in from the wings.

Like his mentor, Robert Altman, who is the movie's producer, Rudolph has always been entranced by the ways in which the aesthetics of place reveal character, but there isn't enough animating substance here to match the hyperbolic décor. His sensibility is not uninteresting, but, in the Southern California way, it's long on visuals and short on ideas, and the burden of making sense of what's on the screen falls almost entirely on the viewer. Still, however opaque Rudolph's talent may be, he has managed to net La Christie—who ultimately does succeed in luring the wayward Nolte back into her bed, which he should have had the sense never to have left in the first place.

TO talk of star power in a culture of supersaturated "Baywatch" celebrity is to sound faintly breathless, as though we were still living in a time when young lovelies hung around Schwab's Drugstore waiting to be discovered. We're ostensibly far beyond that now; we all know, or think we know, what a movie star is. But, truth be told, if stardom were calculable strictly on box-office appeal—or, heaven help us, on Q quotient—the landscape wouldn't be strewn with expensive, heavily marketed flops like "The Postman," with Kevin Costner, and starless, shoestring sleepers like "The Full Monty." Except for a few fixtures, like Robert De Niro and Jack Nicholson, who never promise us anything but their own subversive magnetism and are therefore immune to fluctuations in audience interest, stardom is a dangerously fickle business. (There's probably not another actor out there who could succeed, as Nicholson does in "As Good As It Gets," in making—with no more than a wolfish grin and vocal set of eyebrows—a romantic hero out of the sort of guy you'd move away from on a grocery line.) But what about Kevin Costner—a sure thing, until suddenly he's not? Or the countless contenders who get stuck in ruts? And the ones who break out of them? Who would have predicted that John Travolta would so successfully reinvent himself as a character actor specializing in baby-faced pathos?

EVERY so often, there's the excitement of being present at the creation—when, for example, a Matt Damon unexpectedly comes into focus, surging past the throng of boy actors with foxy faces and trim bodies to grab the spotlight. Whether he's an idealistic law-school graduate, as in Francis Ford Coppola's formulaic adaptation of "The Rainmaker," or a bristling working-class genius, as in "Good Will Hunting," the remarkably uncynical, un-Gen-X-ish movie he co-wrote with Ben Affleck, you can't take your eyes off him. If asked to pinpoint what separates Damon from the rest of the kiddie litter, I could come up with a reasonable explanation—something to do with the layers of character he peels away, so that his wholesomeness seems veined with anger in the Coppola film, while in "Good Will Hunting" his tough-guy stance is softened by vulnerability. But again, maybe his grip on my imagination has more to do with his deep-set, Sinatra-blue gaze than with anything else. All of which goes to show why movies are so unreliable a financial investment and why you can't simply go back to the drawing board and conjure up, say, another Brando.

Of course, it's difficult to figure out the chemistry between two people, much less understand the chemistry between one person and millions of others. Take Ralph Fiennes, whose ability to stir the female heart is second to none in my personal poll, but whose romantic style has little of

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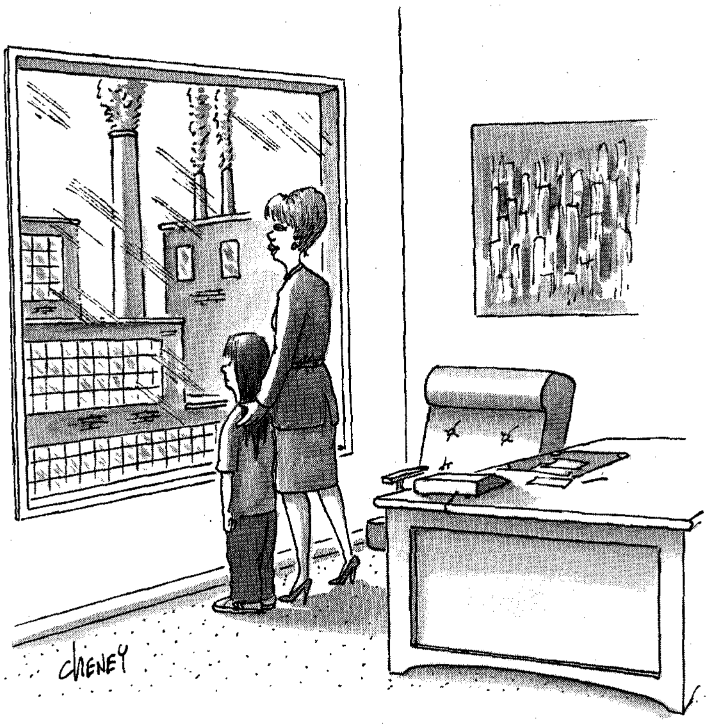


"Someday, sweetheart, all this will belong to your ex-husband and his attorney."

the conquistador about it. In "The English Patient" it was his aloofness that seemed like a wholly original form of flirtation. Even in "Oscar and Lucinda," in which he's done up as a timorous religious penitent—an orange-thatched, mascara-rimmed, phobia-ridden bundle of nerves given to self-mutilation when he's not biting his knuckles—he gives off the erotic heat of a banked fire.

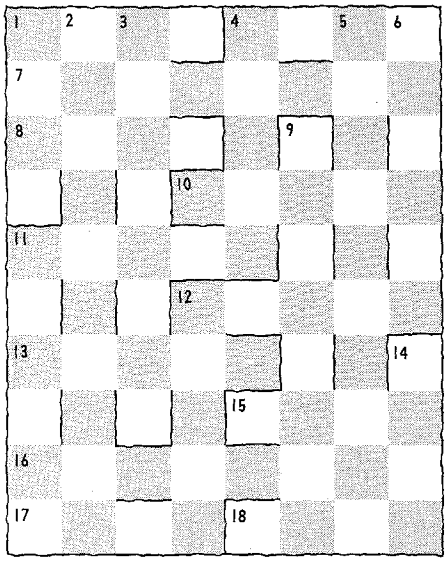
And then there's Daniel Day-Lewis, who's always mesmerizing—gay or crippled, Mohican or Whartonian. There is a chameleon quality to this star, which, in a less fiercely committed actor, might have lessened his star power; with Day-Lewis, however, his protean capacities only strengthen our sense of someone working out his own contradictions, and we are ready to follow him anywhere. In Jim Sheridan's "The Boxer," he's back on the troubled Irish turf of "In the Name of the Father," playing Danny Flynn, a former I.R.A. recruit who returns to Belfast after fourteen years in prison and is set on leading a peaceful life. He rebuilds a boxing club, in the hope of uniting Protestants and Catholics. Along the way, he rediscovers Maggie (Emily Watson), a youthful flame now married to his best friend. In the face of warnings from her father, an I.R.A. leader, along with bloody recriminations from former comrades in terrorism, the two lovers soldier on toward a new order beyond politics and violence.

"The Boxer" is stronger on atmosphere than it is on specifics; it deftly conveys the murky mixture of idealism and thuggishness that has marked the Irish Troubles, and the whole thing is wonderfully lit, as if by flares. But Maggie is no more than a cipher waiting to melt, and, for all Day-Lewis's new, muscled physique, his character seems unsatisfyingly cobbled together. Still, the quiet intensity of his performance gives genuine force to a movie which too often stoops to dialogue like "I'm not a killer, Maggie, but this place makes me want to kill."

In the end, of course, star power is unfathomable—which is one of the reasons we're so affected by it. If the observation that the camera doesn't lie were more of a truth than a truism, being photogenic would be a reflection of character rather than the mere confluence of light and physiognomy. The reality is that the camera does lie—if only because it arbitrarily flatters certain faces and postures, and not others. Actors like Christie, Damon, Fiennes, and Day-Lewis have nothing in common apart from their hold over us, the illusion of offering us intimate knowledge of themselves. Illuminated and magnified on the screen, they reassure us that our most secret desires, our silliest fantasies, are shared. ♦

8 x 10 CRYPTIC

NO. 29 BY MIKE SHENK



ACROSS

1 Help suppressing conservative's biting sarcasm (4)
4 Help suppressing bachelor's sounds of sorrow (4)
7 Farmworker ran first in competition against champion (8)
8 Finishes remodelling dens (4)
10 Plots to seize a necklace (5)
11 Tropical location is rented (5)
12 Father took command, showed fear (5)
13 Doctor taking in a bit of money from the Middle East (5)
15 Reportedly get rid of loafer (4)
16 Surprisingly good news occurs (4,4)
17 Wild party, peculiarly gory (4)
18 Was triumphant at start of trade convention (4)

DOWN

1 War god right in the middle of rising ocean (4)
2 Republicanism in organization including a group of stars (5,5)
3 Stylish party at end of Mardi Gras is marked by lethargy (8)
4 Covering Haggard novel and Spielberg movie (5)
5 Actress Fonda to hold title to city in Barbados (10)
6 Drunk and therefore exploited (6)
9 Outcry from hobo roughly grabbing confederate (8)
11 Characters from Spain dig orange color (6)
12 Dupe holy man, turning in wages (5)
14 Small amount of money conveyed to an auditor (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 28 appears on this page. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

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ACROSS

1 ACES (hidden)
4 RAFT (2 defs.)
7 R(ANT)ING
8 TI(G)ERS
9 HARPISTS (anag.)
11 EVE + R
14 C + HAT
15 INTER + EST.
16 THIRST (anag.)
17 PE(SKI)ER
18 cHOSE
19 ACRE (*acher* hom.)

DOWN

1 ARCHER (2 defs.)
2 CA(RAVe)AN
3 ENTR(EA + T)IES
4 RIG + ID
5 ANESTHETIC (hidden)
6 TO + SS
10 TOASTER (anag.)
12 AT + TIRE
13 PER SE (2 defs.)
15 IT + CH

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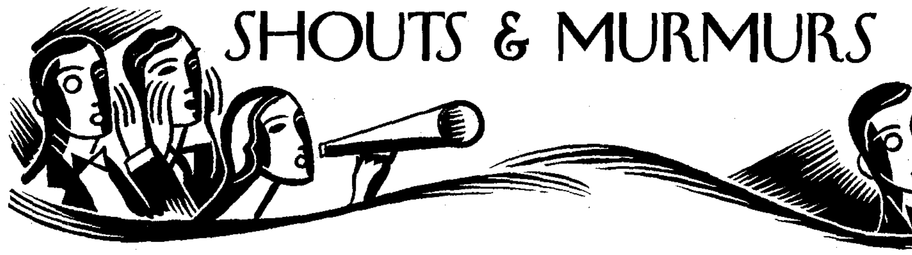


CHANGES IN THE MEMORY AFTER FIFTY

BY STEVE MARTIN

BORED? Here's a way the over-fifty set can easily kill a good half hour:

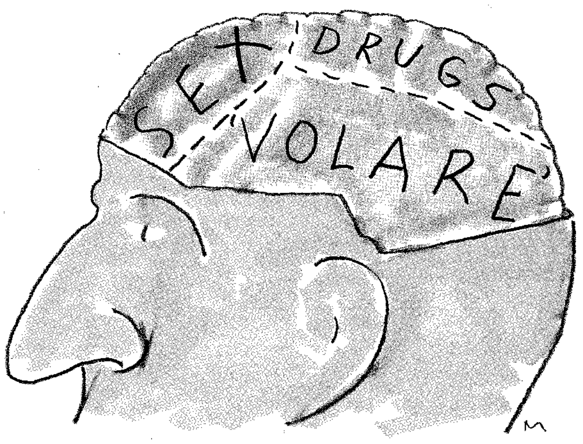
1. Place your car keys in your right hand.
2. With your left hand, call a friend and confirm a lunch or dinner date.
3. Hang up the phone.
4. Now look for your car keys.

(*For answer, turn magazine upside down.*)

The lapses of memory that occur after fifty are normal and in some ways beneficial. There are certain things it's better to forget, like the time Daddy once failed to praise you, and now, forty years later, you have to count the tiles in the bathroom—first in multiples of three, then in multiples of five, and so on, until they come out even—or else you can't get out of the shower. The memory is selective, and sometimes it will select 1956 and 1963 and that's all. Such memory lapses don't necessarily indicate a more serious health problem. The rule is that if you think you have a pathological memory problem you probably don't. In fact, the most serious indicator is when you're convinced you're fine and yet people often ask you, "Why are you here in your pajamas at the Kennedy Center Honors?"

Let's say you've just called your best friend, Joe, and invited him to an upcoming anniversary party, and then, minutes later, you call Joe back to invite him to the same party again. This does not mean that you are "losing it" or are "not playing with a full deck" or are "not all there" or that you're "eating with the dirigibles" or "shellacking the waxed egg" or "looking inside your own mind and finding nothing there," or any of the other demeaning epithets that are said about people who are peeling an empty banana. It does mean, however, that perhaps Joe is no longer on the list of things that you're going to remember. This is Joe's fault. He should be more memorable. He should have a name like *El Elegante*.

Sometimes it's fun to sit in your garden and try to remember your dog's name. Here's how: simply watch the dog's ears while calling out pet names at random. This is a great summer activity, especially in combination with "Name That Wife" and "Who Am I?"



These games actually strengthen the memory, and make it possible to solve more complicated problems, such as "Is this the sixth time I've urinated this hour or the seventh?" This, of course, is easily answered by tiny pencil marks applied during the day.

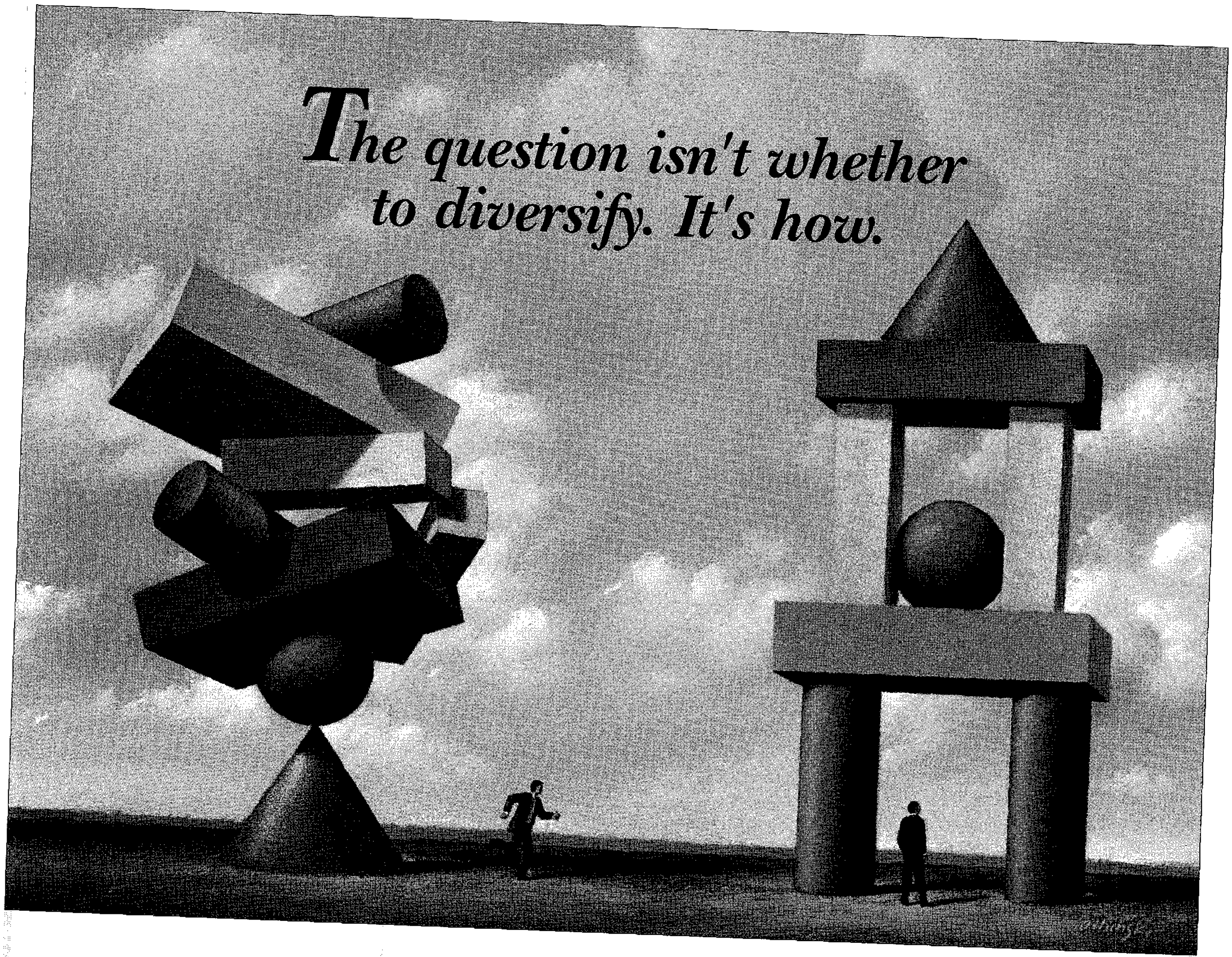
NOTE TO SELF: Remember to write article about waxy buildup.

If you have a doctor who is over fifty, it's wise to pay attention to his changing memory profile. There is nothing more disconcerting than a patient and a healer staring at each other across an examining table wondering why they're there. Watch out for the stethoscope being placed on the forehead or the briefcase. Watch out for greetings such as "Hello . . . you." Be concerned if while looking for your file he keeps referring to you as "one bad boy." Men should be wary if the doctor, while examining their prostate, suddenly says, "I'm sorry, but do I know you?"

There are several theories to explain the memory problems of advancing age. One is that the brain is full: it simply has too much data to compute. This is easy to understand if we realize that the name of your third-grade teacher is still occupying space, not to mention the lyrics to "Volare." One solution for older men is to take all the superfluous data swirling around in the brain and download it into the newly large stomach, where there is plenty of room. This frees the brain to house more relevant information, like the particularly troublesome "days of the week." Another solution is to take regular doses of *Ginkgo biloba*, an extract from a tree in Asia whose memory is so indelible that one day it will hunt down and kill all the humans who have been eating it. It is strongly advised that those taking *Ginkgo biloba* label the bottle "Memory Pills." There is nothing more embarrassing than looking at a bottle of *Ginkgo biloba* and thinking it's a reliquary for a Spanish explorer.

SO, in summary, waxy buildup is a problem all of us face. Only a good, strong cleanser, used once or twice a month, will save us the humiliation of that petrified yellow crust on our furniture. Again, I recommend an alcohol-free, polymer-based cleanser, applied with a damp cloth. Good luck! ♦

Your car keys are in your right hand. Please remember to turn magazine right side up.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